

An aerial photograph of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Area, showing a dense urban landscape with numerous buildings, roads, and green spaces. The city skyline is visible in the distance under a clear sky.

Las Vegas Metropolitan Area Social Survey 2010 Highlights

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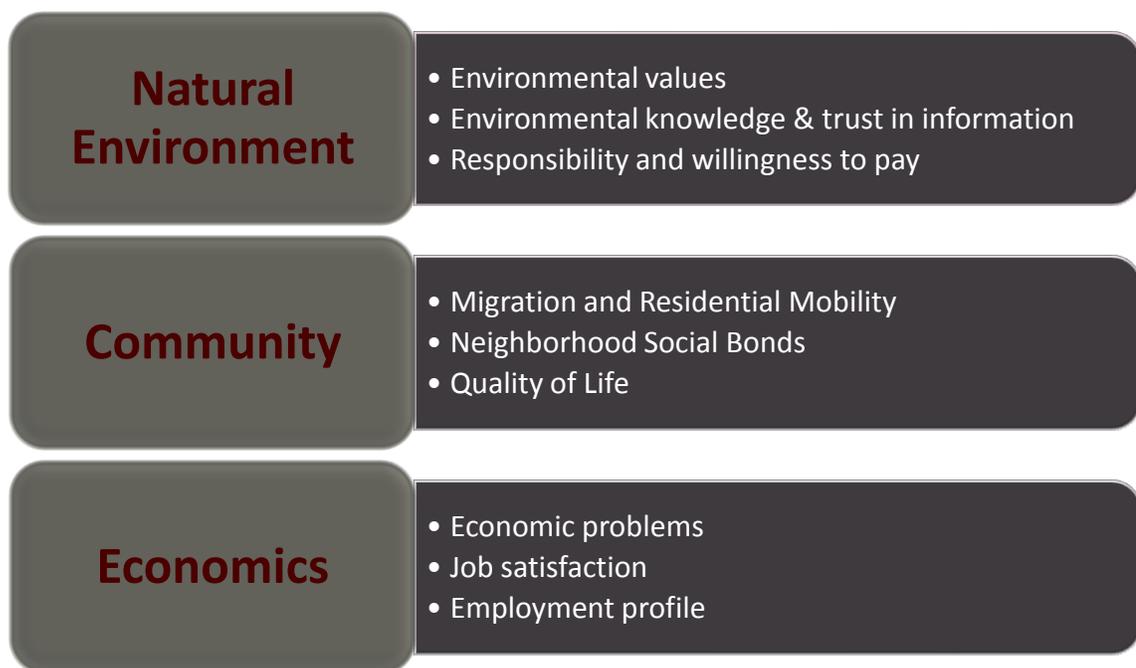
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About the LVMASS

UNLV sociologists conducted the Las Vegas Metropolitan Area Social Survey (LVMASS) to identify the socio-spatial distribution of attitudes and attributes relevant to urban sustainability in the Las Vegas Valley. The project goal is to understand how Las Vegas residents think about urban sustainability issues across three dimensions: 1) natural environment; 2) community and quality of life; 3) economy.



During the last decade of the 20th century, Las Vegas was one of the fastest growing urban areas in the United States. Between 1990 and 2000, the Las Vegas metropolitan area population increased by 83%. Between 2000 and 2007, the metro area continued this growth, steadily increasing population by nearly 70,000 people per year, or 5,800 people per month. In 2007, Clark County, Nevada had a population of roughly 1.85 million people. Beginning in late 2007, population and economic growth rates were severely impacted by the national economic recession. In 2010, economic and population growth stagnated.

Almost two decades of a surging economy and rapid population growth created social, economic, and ecological strains. Social services such as healthcare and education are stressed, inequalities are sharpening, social cohesion is tenuous, water and energy supplies are overextended, and clear planning for land use and preservation is vital.

Developing workable planning solutions to the challenges facing the Las Vegas metropolitan area, as well as understanding the consequences of rapid urbanization more broadly, demands

information about the attitudes and attributes of residents. To date, there has been surprisingly little systematic data on how Las Vegas think about their urban environment. LVMASS asks residents what they know about their social, built, and natural environments and what they want for their lives in the future.

By capturing spatial and demographic variation in Valley residents' attitudes and attributes relevant to urban sustainability, LVMASS offers citizens a picture of themselves, as well as give Valley leaders, urban researchers, and planners data to address sustainability issues in the 21st century.

Research methods

The LVMASS team used two major research methods to measure Las Vegas Valley resident's knowledge, attitudes, and aspirations. Drawing from a representative sample of Las Vegas neighborhoods, we conducted a survey to examine spatial and economic differences across the Las Vegas Valley. To supplement our survey data with robust qualitative descriptions from Valley residents, we conducted a series of focus groups using a smaller sample of the neighborhoods in our sample.

The LVMASS Survey

The 2009 Las Vegas Metropolitan Area Social Survey (LVMASS) is the first survey of its kind to explore social, economic, and environmental knowledge and attitudes of Valley residents at the neighborhood level. Neighborhoods were selected from the 185 census tracts within the Las Vegas Valley, including the cities of Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Henderson, and Clark County jurisdictions. The outlying cities of Mesquite, Boulder City, and Laughlin are excluded from this study.



Surveys were administered from June to November 2009 by the Cannon Survey Center at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Our sample includes neighborhoods with at least 40 households. Because some neighborhoods are larger than

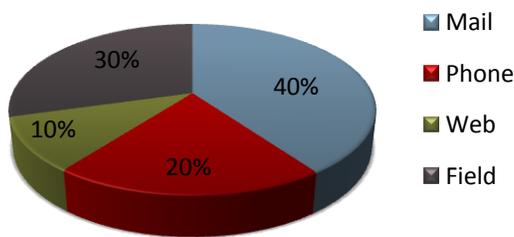
others, the sample size in each neighborhood ranged from 40 to 125. Our goal was to reach 25% of all households in each neighborhood. Respondents were sent a recruitment letter and initially provided with access to a web-based survey or telephone survey. After exhausting the telephone and web-based response, we used mailed surveys and field surveys. Our final study population was 2,401 households in 22 neighborhoods. Our final sample size was 664 households, for a 32% response rate.

To ensure our sample includes neighborhoods of diverse socioeconomic status, we stratified the Las Vegas metropolitan census tracts by household income into quartiles. Using median

household income from Census 2000 data, our income quartiles include low-income (less than 35,765), middle-low income (35,766-48,026), middle-high income (48,027-60,135) and high-income (60,136 and above). Our sampling strategy is based on a stratified four-stage cluster sample.

- **Stage 1:** Random selection of 20 block groups in each income quartile, for a total of 80 block groups.
- **Stage 2:** Random selection of 5 block groups in each income quartile from the remaining block groups after geographic mapping confirmed their residential viability for inclusion. Total sample includes 20 block groups.
- **Stage 3:** Field research to identify neighborhood boundaries and divisions. Random selection of 1 neighborhood within each of the 5 block groups in each income quartile. Total sample includes 20 neighborhoods.
- **Stage 4:** Random selection of households within each neighborhood.

How Respondents Answered the Survey



Additional Neighborhoods: Based on the census tract age distribution, we randomly selected 2 block groups with an average population age over 60 years old. On-site raters examined these block groups to identify retirement neighborhoods. Two retirement neighborhoods were randomly selected for inclusion in the sample. Household addresses were randomly selected from each neighborhood.

Focus groups

In conjunction with a separate research project exploring the opinions of City of Las Vegas residents, the research team conducted five focus groups between October 7, 2009 and November 3, 2009. Four focus groups were conducted in English, and one was conducted in Spanish. Four focus groups were held in the evenings, and one on a Saturday afternoon, at City of Las Vegas community centers: the Cimarron Rose Community Center, Rafael Rivera Community Center, and the East Las Vegas Community/Senior Center. Each focus group lasted between 80-90 minutes. The focus groups provide robust qualitative data on City of Las Vegas residents' thoughts and opinions on quality of life issues.

Thirty-one focus group participants were recruited from seven randomly selected neighborhoods across six wards in the City of Las Vegas. These seven neighborhoods were part of the LVMASS random sample of 22 neighborhoods. The neighborhoods selected for focus group participation included single and multi-family housing units. The focus group research team canvassed each neighborhood, distributing flyers to announce the focus groups and recruit participants. Each participant was offered a \$30 cash incentive for their involvement. After an initial screening of each volunteer, we obtained a total sample of 31 focus group participants.

The focus group process consisted of a semi-structured conversation about neighborhood experiences and quality of life issues. We posed a series of questions to participants to elicit their thoughts in three main areas:

1. Sense of pride, belonging and attachment to the City of Las Vegas and their neighborhood
2. Neighborhood experiences
3. Sustainability

The combination of survey and focus group data provides a robust profile of how Las Vegas Valley residents think about life in Southern Nevada. The following sections describe the study respondents, LVMAS findings and focus group highlights, and offer some policy considerations based on this data.

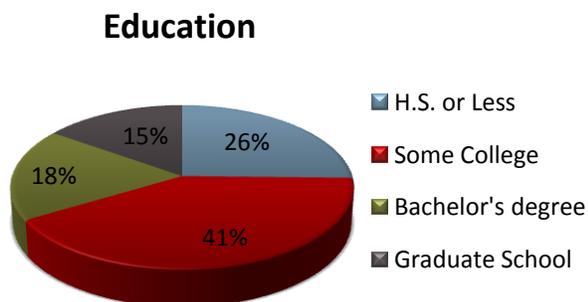
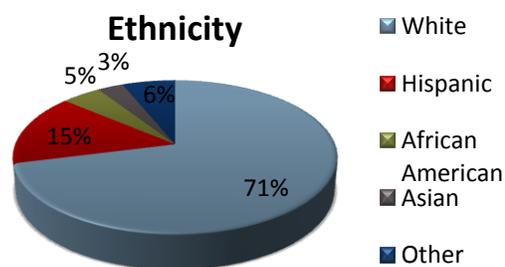
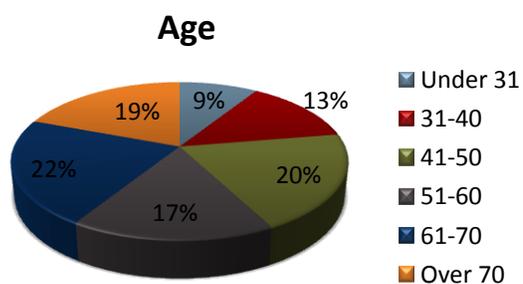


LVMASS Respondents

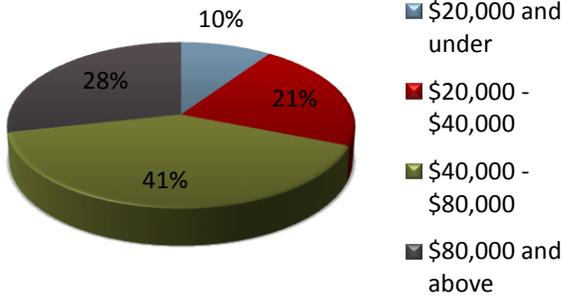
Survey Respondents

The following percentages and graphs show the characteristics of the LVMASS respondents.

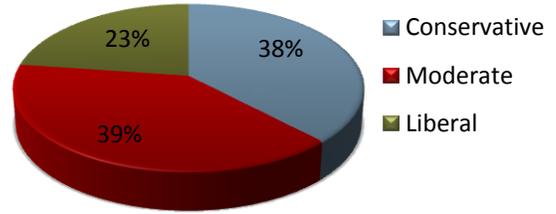
- 58% Female
- 56% Married
- 79% Own their home
- 8% Born in Las Vegas
- 71% White
- 5% African American
- 15% Hispanic



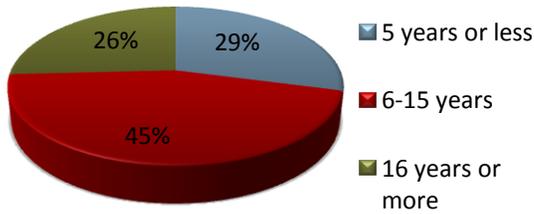
Household Income



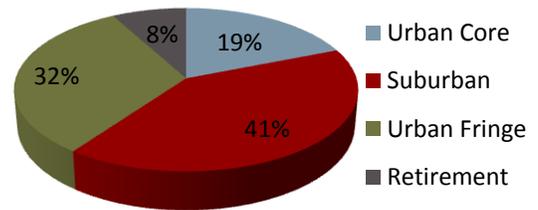
Political Affiliation



Years Lived at Current Residence



Neighborhood Type



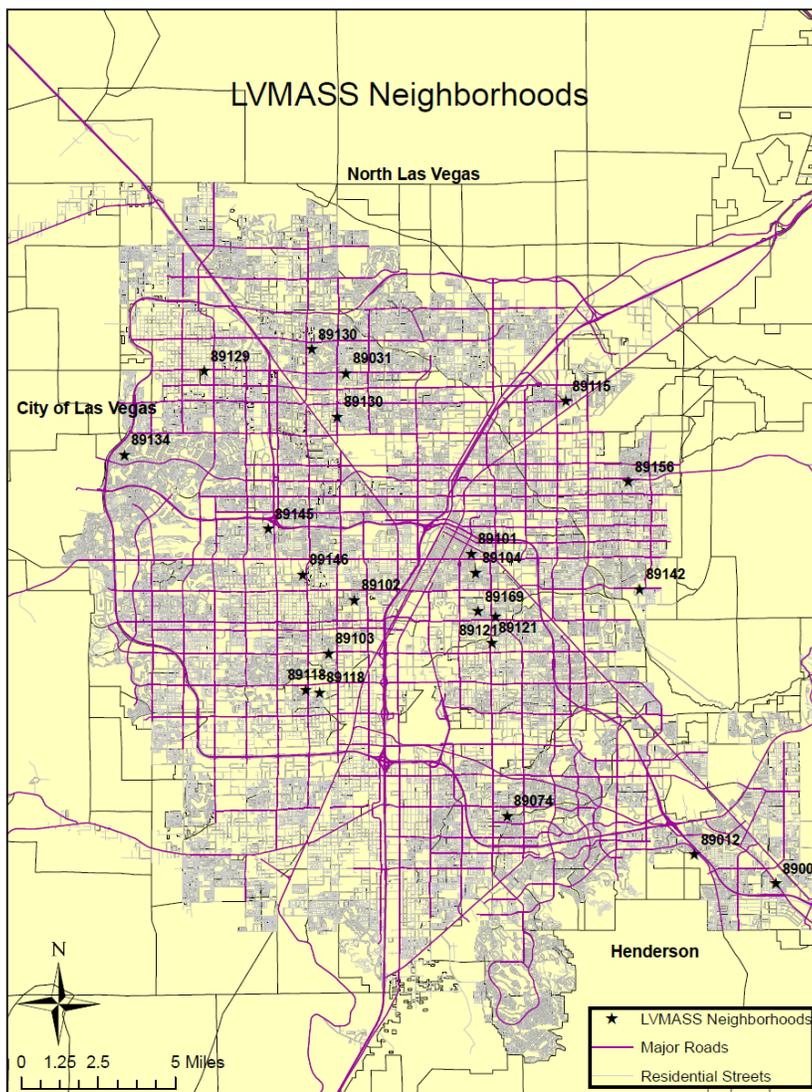
Focus Group Respondents

Our final sample size for focus group research was 31 respondents. Respondents contacted for participation were drawn from randomly selected neighborhoods in the LVMASS sample and self-selected to be involved in the focus groups. Compared to larger survey samples, focus groups draw from smaller, less representative samples of individuals. Participants provide qualitative insights about their thoughts and experiences on issue raised in the survey. Focus group participants included:

- 65% Female
- 52% Own their home
- 67% White
- 37% Hispanic

LVMASS Neighborhoods

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Area Social Survey reflects the diversity of neighborhoods, households, and people who make up the Las Vegas Valley. Neighborhood types are designated to capture the spatial distribution of neighborhoods across the Valley and differences in the age of each neighborhood type. The 22 neighborhoods in LVMASS have been separated into four distinct neighborhood types based on spatial distribution from the Las Vegas urban core.



Five neighborhoods are identified as Urban Core, defined as neighborhoods within approximately 5 miles of downtown City of Las Vegas. Nine neighborhoods are identified as Suburban, defined as neighborhoods approximately 5-10 miles from the Urban Core. Six neighborhoods are identified as Urban Fringe, defined as neighborhoods more than 10 miles from the Urban Core. An additional two neighborhoods are identified as retirement communities where the average age of residents is over 55.

Natural Environment

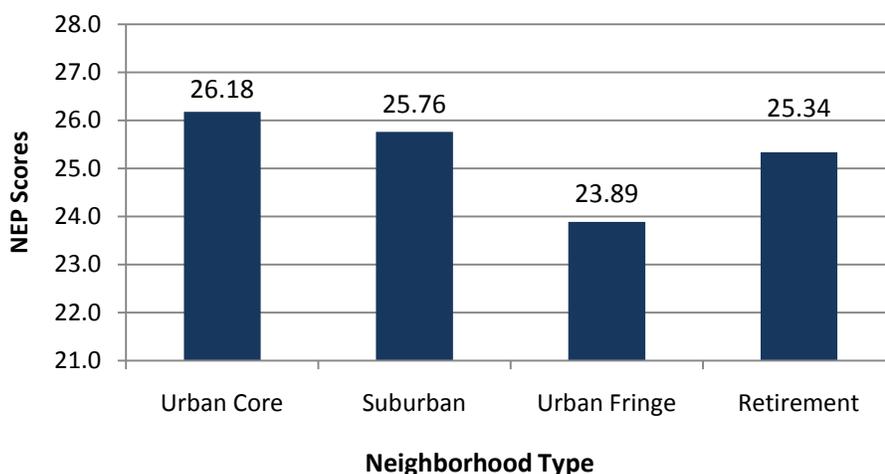
Environmental Values

Do Valley Residents Value the Environment?

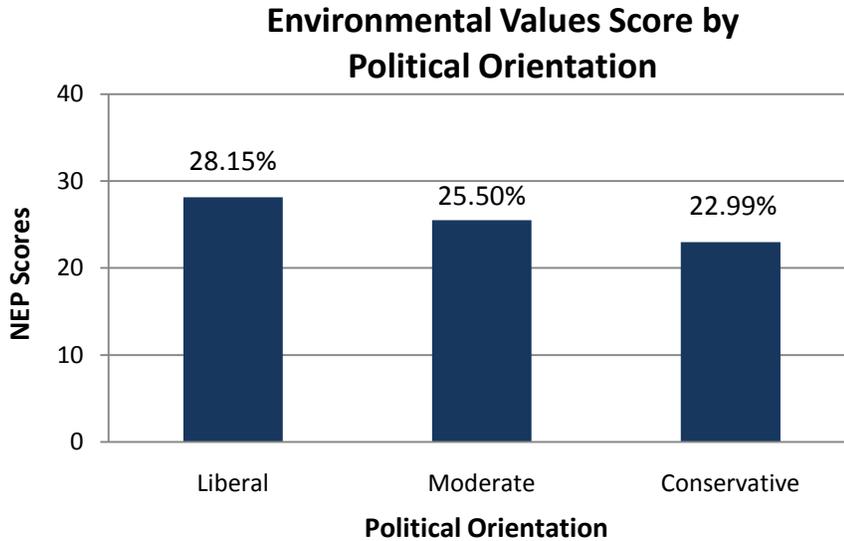
Las Vegas Valley residents value the natural environment. We asked survey respondents to complete a series of 10 questions designed to assess the degree to which they value a sustainable natural environment. These questions make up the New Ecological Paradigm scale (NEP) used by social scientists to measure a population's environmental attitudes. Possible NEP scale scores range from 0 to 40 points. Higher scores on the scale represent stronger environmental values. The minimum respondent score in our sample is 4 and the maximum score in the sample is 36. The mean score for all respondents is 25.20.

All neighborhood types score above the NEP scale mean score of 20, indicating that people across all neighborhood types value the natural environment. Urban Core neighborhoods score highest in environmental values, followed by Suburban neighborhoods, Retirement residents, and those in Urban Fringe neighborhoods.

Environmental Values Score by Neighborhood Type



While Valley residents of all political orientations value the natural environment, environmental values scores vary across political orientation of survey respondents. Those indicating a Liberal political orientation score about three points higher on the NEP scale than Moderates, and more than five points higher than Conservatives.

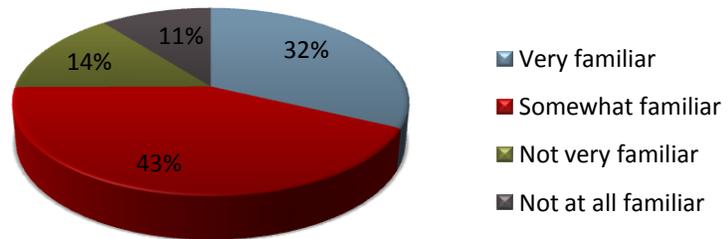


Environmental Knowledge & Trust in Environmental Information

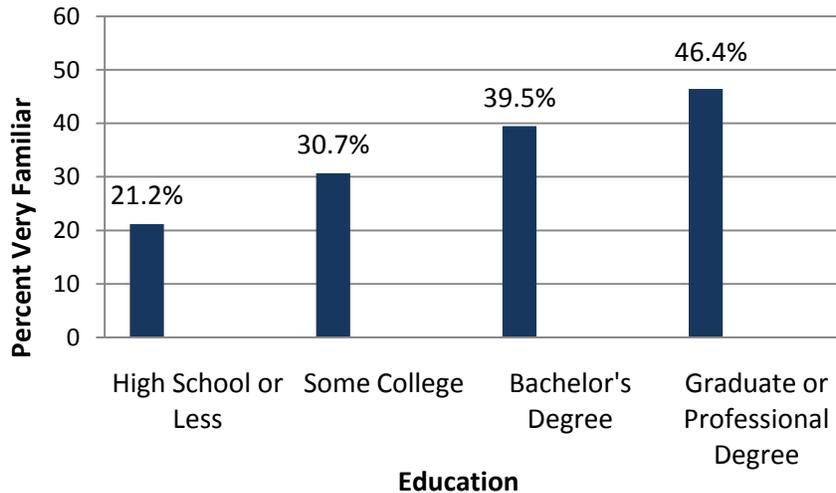
What do Las Vegas Valley residents know about the term sustainability?

Las Vegas Valley residents are familiar with the term “sustainability.” More than 75% said they were at least “somewhat familiar” with the term, with 32% indicating they are “very familiar” with sustainability. Familiarity with the term sustainability grows with increases in educational attainment.

Familiarity with the Term Sustainability



Familiarity with the Term Sustainability by Educational Attainment



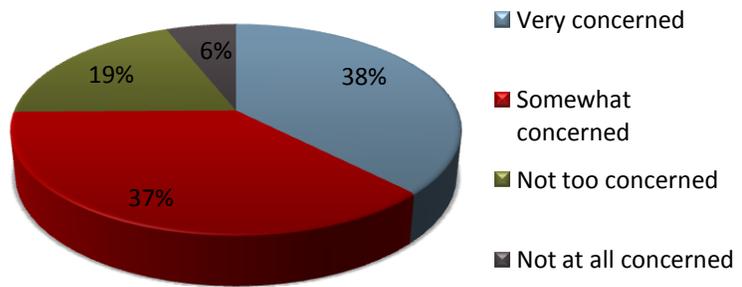
Focus group highlight: Although most survey respondents were familiar with the word “sustainability,” there is no clear consensus on what sustainability means. For some focus group participants, sustainability means economic diversification or maintaining a high standard of living. Other participants interpret sustainability more narrowly to refer to reductions in environmental impact through recycling or using renewable energy and other “green” technologies. Policy makers might engage in outreach efforts to build on the existing familiarity with the term “sustainability” to illustrate how households can make decisions that are economically sound and environmentally friendly.



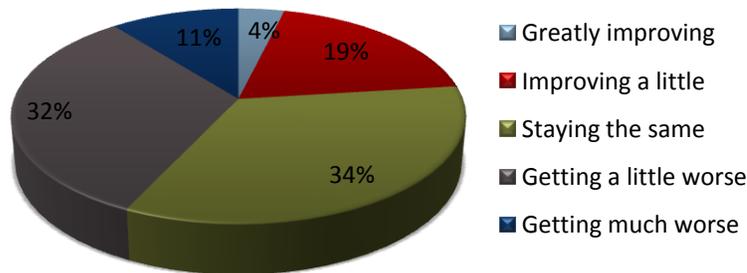
What do residents know about environmental problems

A large majority of Valley residents are knowledgeable and concerned about some of our most pressing environmental problems. Seventy-five percent of respondent are “somewhat concerned” or “very concerned” about air pollution in the Valley. Only 23% think that Valley air quality is improving, while the majority (66%) think that air quality is “staying the same” or “getting worse.” A larger majority (88%) of Valley residents understand we are in a drought. However, 11.9% still do not acknowledge drought conditions in Las Vegas.

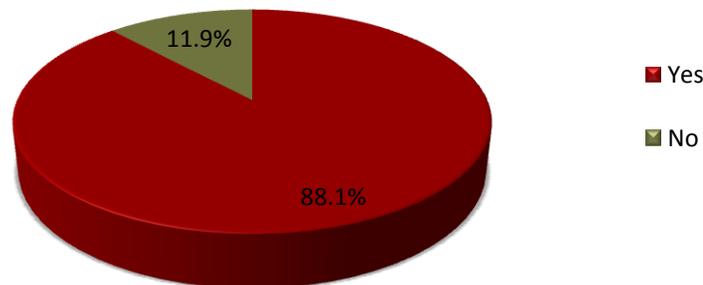
Air Pollution Concern



Air Quality in Las Vegas Valley



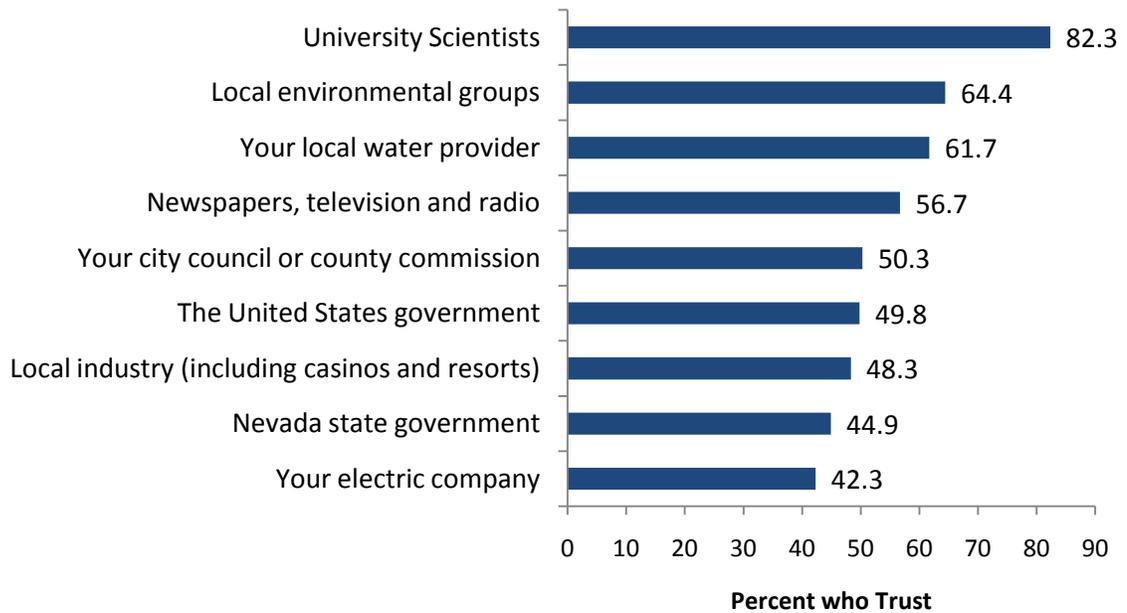
Is the Las Vegas Valley in a Drought?



Who do Valley Residents Trust for Environmental Information?

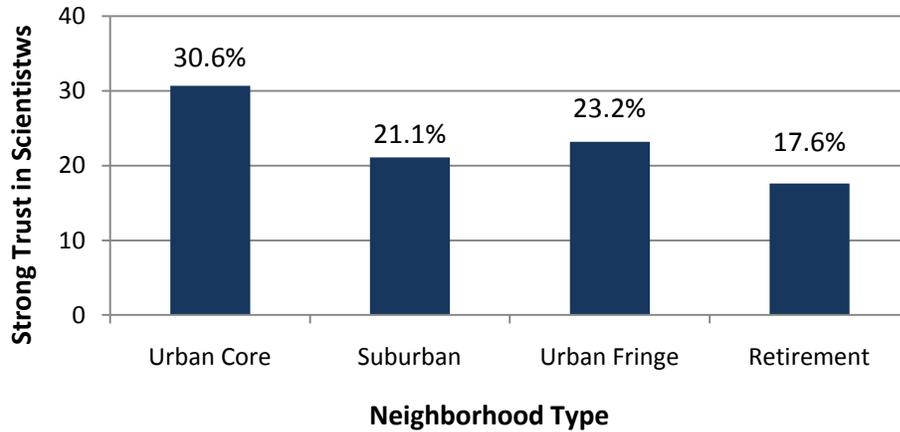
Las Vegas Valley residents trust university scientists for their environmental information. We asked respondents how much they trust each group to provide truthful information about environmental issues in the Las Vegas Valley. More than 82% of survey respondents strongly (23.3%) or somewhat trust (59%) university scientists for their environmental knowledge. The next most trusted source for environmental information is local environmental groups (64.4%). More than half also trust their local water provider (61.7%), newspapers, television, and radio (56.7%) and their city council or commission (50.3%). Valley residents place least trust in their electric company for environmental information. A large segment of respondents were somewhat skeptical about the truthfulness of information from most sources. Most people at least somewhat trusted environmental information from several sources, but percentages that strongly trusted were very low for all but university scientists.

Trust in Information about Environmental Knowledge

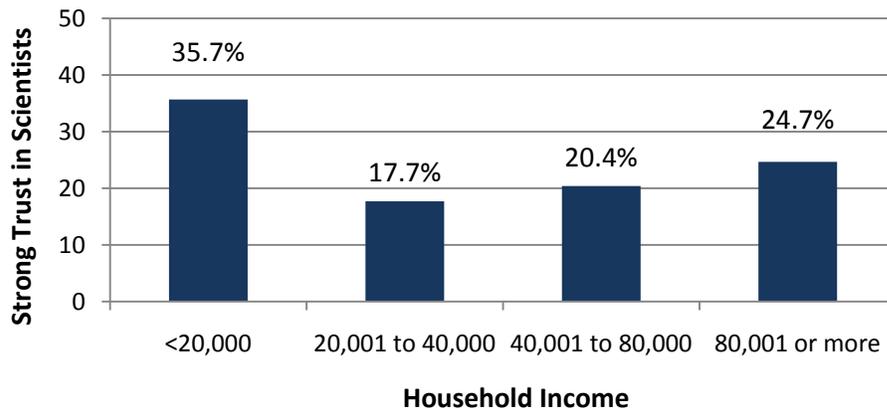


Strong trust in scientists differs significantly by neighborhood type, household income, and political orientation. Strong trust in university scientists was more common in Urban Core neighborhoods, in lower income households, and among political liberals. Most respondents in Suburban, Urban Fringe, and Retirement neighborhoods, those with middle or higher household incomes, and who are politically moderate or conservative “somewhat trusted” university scientists for environmental information.

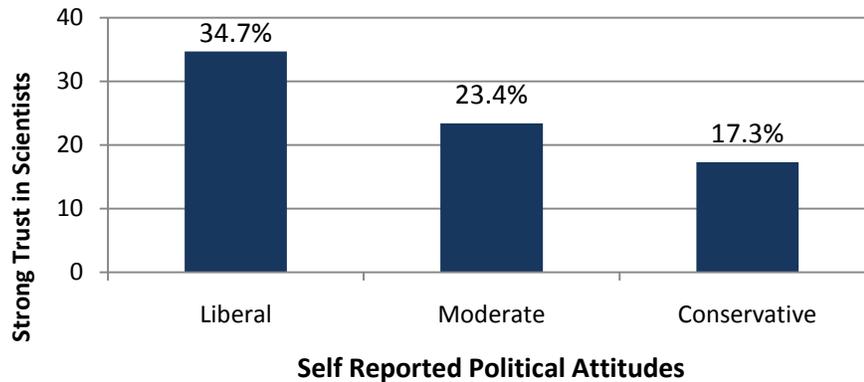
Type of Neighborhood and Strong Trust in University Scientists



Income and Strong Trust in University Scientists



Political Orientation and Strong Trust in University Scientists

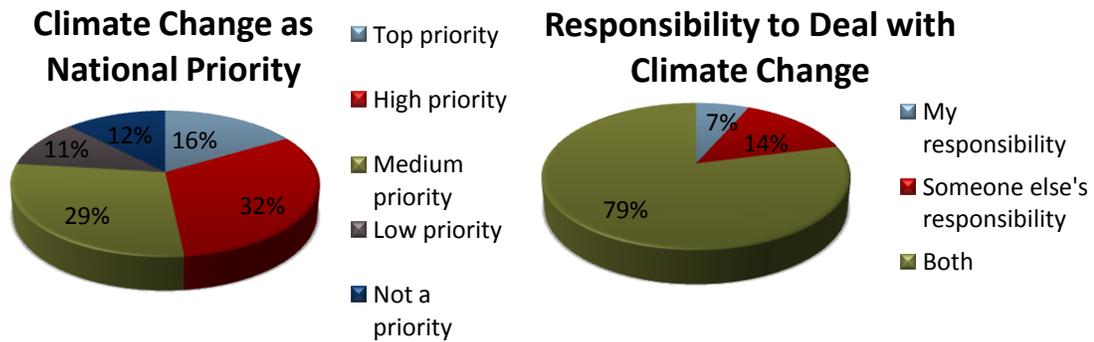


Implications: Public confidence in sources of environmental information is important for persuading people to change behaviors that negatively impact the environment. The high confidence placed in university scientists suggests that Valley residents would be receptive to more direct engagement with scientists and scientific research findings. Government-university research collaborations such as the LVMASS offer multiple opportunities for public-science engagement and can benefit future policy-making.

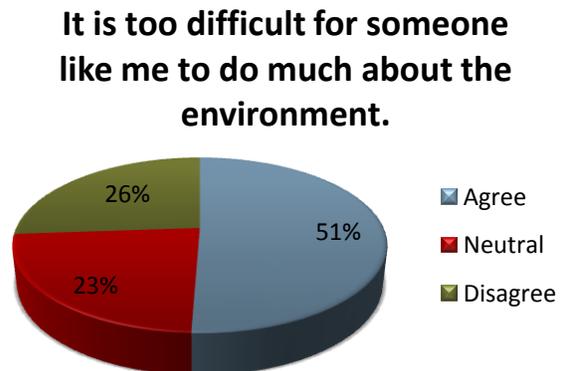
Responsibility & Willingness to Pay

What do Valley residents think they can do about the environment?

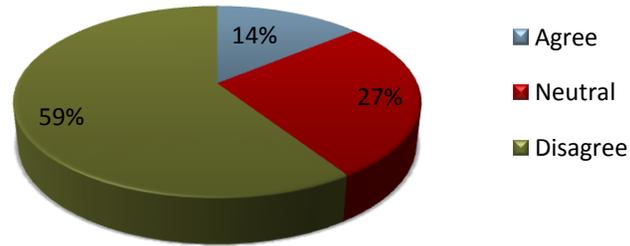
Valley resident’s knowledge and concern about local environmental issues carries over to their sense that some action needs to be taken to deal with environmental problems. The question is where should this action come from. Almost half (48%) of all survey respondents feel that climate change is either the “top priority” or a “high priority” for the nation, and another 29% rank it as at least a medium priority. A large majority of residents (79%) also indicate that climate change is a collective responsibility.



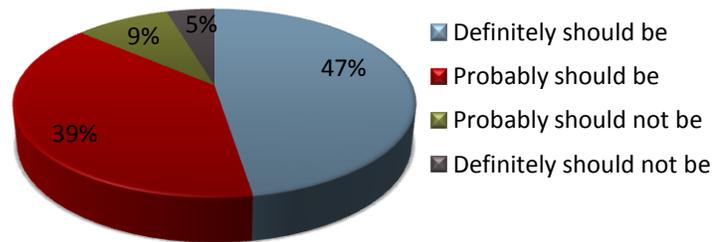
Yet, when asked about their actions, more than half of the survey respondents (51%) feel their individual actions do not have much effect on the environment. Even more respondents (59%) say that they do not individually go out of their way to spend more time or money to do what is right for the environment. Instead, residents look to government to impose strict laws on industries to reduce their environmental impacts. Forty-seven percent of respondents feel this definitely should be a government role, and another 39% think it probably should be a government role. Only 14% feel that it probably or definitely should not be a government role.



I do what is right for the environment, even when it costs more money or takes up more time.



Government's Responsibility to Impose Strict Laws to make Industry do Less Damage to Environment



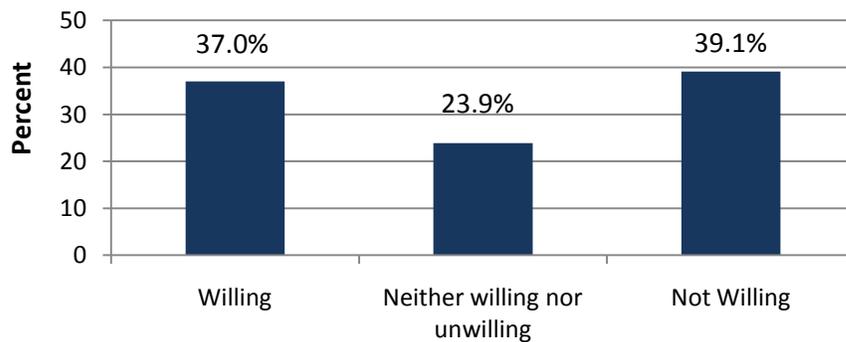
Implications: Many people seem caught between their positive attitudes toward protecting the environment and their reservations about investing extra time or money to do so. This confusion may be tied to whether or not they feel their individual pro-environment actions would even make a difference. Residents look toward government as the place where environmental problems are most effectively addressed and solved. Policy makers might play a more active role in environmental protection and engage in outreach efforts to educate and encourage residents to employ convenient, low cost environmentally friendly household behaviors.

Who will pay for protecting the environment?

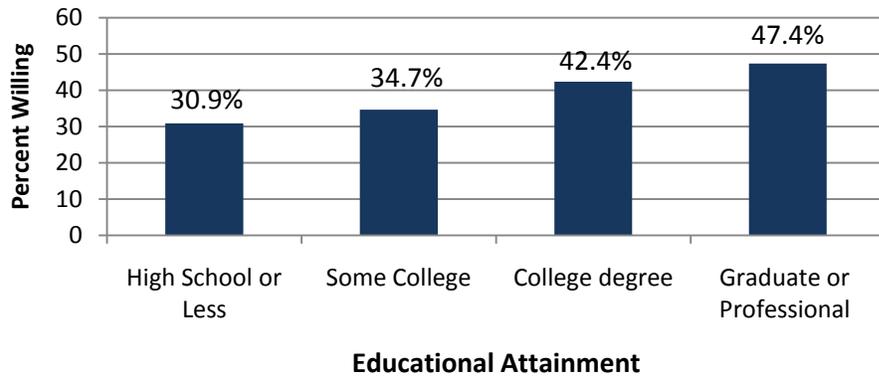
Valley residents are generally not willing to pay more right now to protect the environment. We asked Valley residents if they would be willing to pay along three dimensions: willingness to pay higher prices, higher taxes, and reduced standard of living. Only 37% percent of respondents indicated they would be very willing (5%) or fairly willing (32%) to pay higher prices to protect the environment. Slightly more than 39% of respondents are not very willing (26.2%) or not at all willing (12.9%) to pay much more. Almost 24% of respondents place themselves in between these two positions as neither willing nor unwilling to pay much more to protect the environment. Education level affects willingness to pay. More than 47% of residents with a graduate or professional degree are willing to pay much higher prices, compared to only 31% of residents with a high school degree or less.



Willingness to Pay Much Higher Prices in Order to Protect the Environment

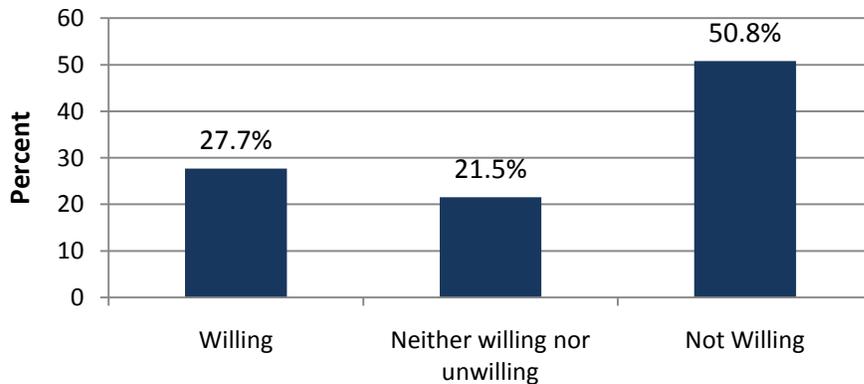


Willingness to Pay Much Higher Prices in Order to Protect the Environment within Education

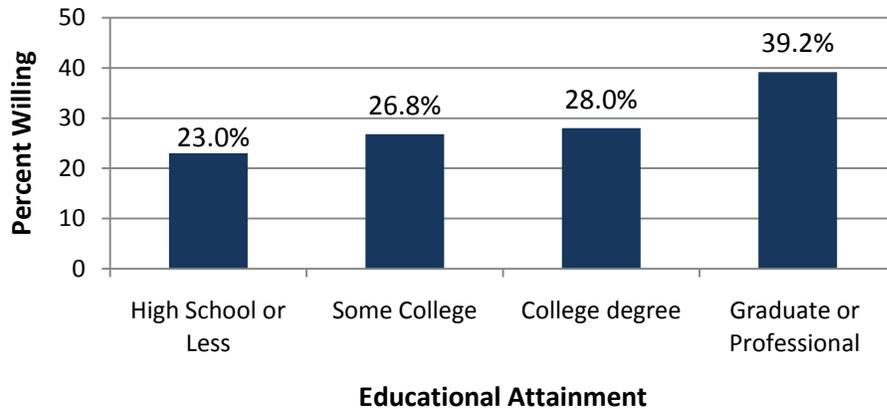


Percentages of residents willing to pay much more declines when payment is in the form of taxes. Only 27.7% percent of respondents indicated they would be very willing (4.4%) or fairly willing (23.3%) to pay much higher taxes to protect the environment. Slightly more than half (50.8%) of respondents are not very willing (28.5%) or not at all willing (22.4%) to pay much more. Slightly more than twenty-one percent (21.5%) of respondents are neither willing nor unwilling to pay much more taxes to protect the environment. Education level also affects willingness to pay much higher taxes. More than 39% of residents with a graduate or professional degree are willing to pay much higher prices, compared to only 23% of residents with a high school degree or less.

Willingness to Pay Much Higher Taxes in Order to Protect the Environment

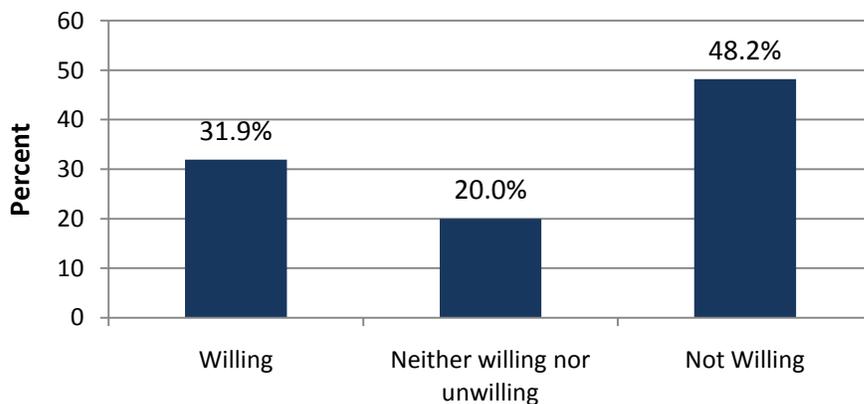


Willingness to Pay Much Higher Taxes in Order to Protect the Environment by Education

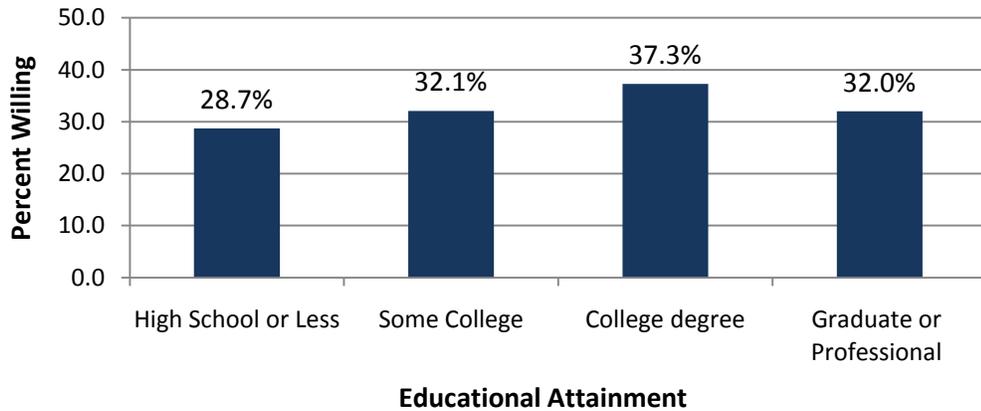


Almost thirty-two percent of respondents are very willing (6.3%) or fairly willing (25.6%) to accept cuts in their standard of living to protect the environment. Just over forty-eight percent are not very willing (28.2%) or not at all willing (20%) to accept cuts. Exactly twenty percent say they are neither willing nor unwilling to reduce their standard of living to protect the environment. Willingness to reduce standard of living increases as educational attainment increases until the graduate or professional level is attained. Fewer residents with advanced graduate or professional degrees (32%) say they are willing to reduce their standard of living than residents with a college degree (37.3).

Willingness to Accept Cuts in Your Standard of Living in Order to Protect the Environment



Willingness to Accept Cuts in Your Standard of Living in Order to Protect the Environment by Education



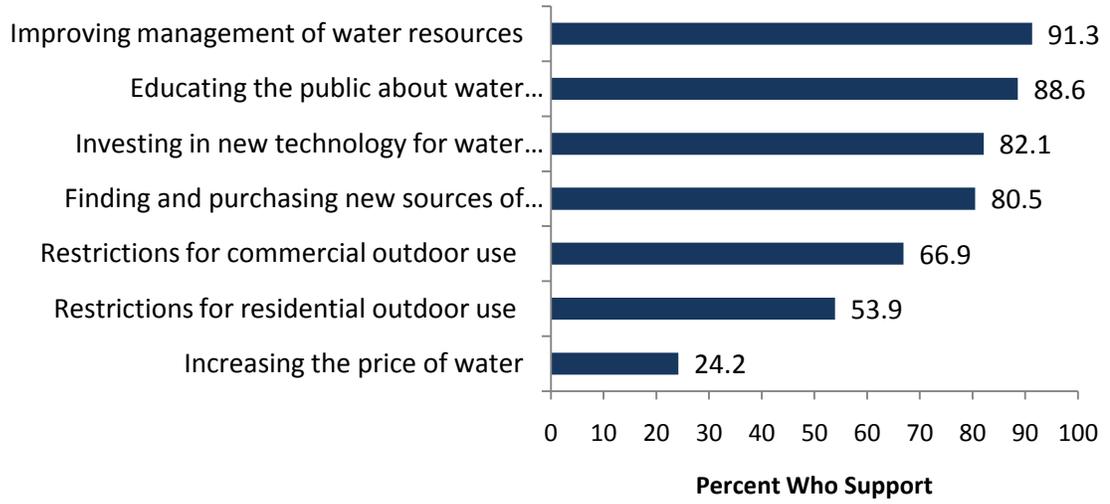
Implications: The economic recession may explain some of the hesitancy among Valley residents to pay much higher prices and taxes right now to protect the environment. Many households, especially lower income households, have likely already experienced reductions in their standard of living due to the economic downturn, which may also help to explain resistance to added cuts to their standard of living. A sizeable percentage of residents take the middle ground between being willing and unwilling to pay more or reduce their standard of living. This may indicate a desire for clear programs and goals to be in place before they will voluntarily agree to pay much more for environmental protection. Public education programs may be needed to provide clear information about how increased costs of investing in environmental stewardship can be economically beneficial to individual households over the long term.

Do Las Vegas Valley Residents Support Water Conservation?

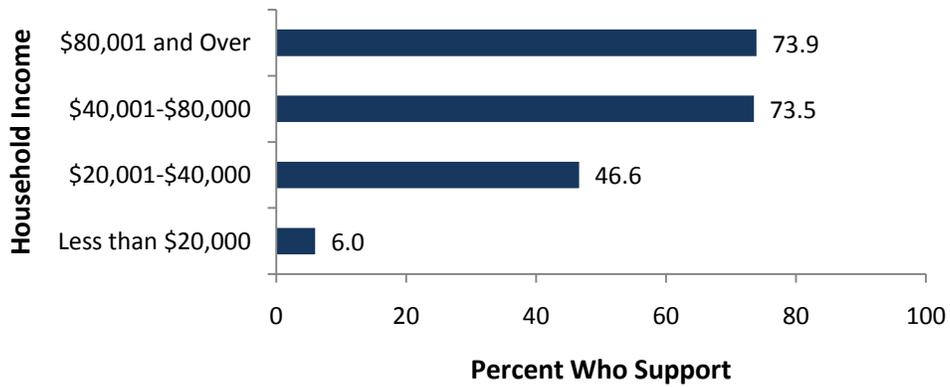
Valley residents strongly support several water conservation measures, as well as efforts to find new water sources for the area. A majority of all respondents support all of the water conservation measures we asked them about except for one—increasing the price of water. Only 24.2% of respondents say they support increased water prices as a conservation tool. Three conservation measures have more than 82% of respondents' support. Respondents place most support (91.3%) behind improving water resource management efforts. Water conservation education measures are supported by 88.6% of respondents, while 82.1% of respondents say we should invest more in technology to enhance water efficiency.

Support for increasing water prices as a conservation measure is heavily skewed toward those with incomes of more than \$40,000.

Support for Various Water Policies



Support for Increasing the Price of Water



Community & Quality of Life

A key component of any sustainable metropolitan area is the sense of attachment residents have to the area, the strength of social bonds, and feelings about their quality of life. It is clear that the Las Vegas Valley's phenomenal growth in past years has created both opportunities and obstacles to residents' sense of connection. In this section, we discuss migration and residential mobility, residents' sense of attachment to place, neighborhood bonds and neighborliness, and respondents' sense of their quality of life.

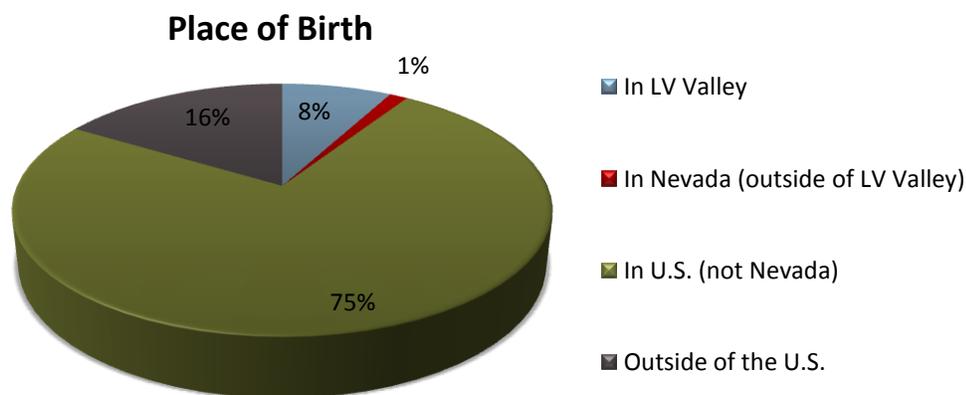
"I am friendly with my neighbors and...we look out for each other...But, it's like nobody really does get too close because people move a lot. The ground just moves a lot."

LVMASS focus group participant

Migration and residential mobility

Where Do We Come From?

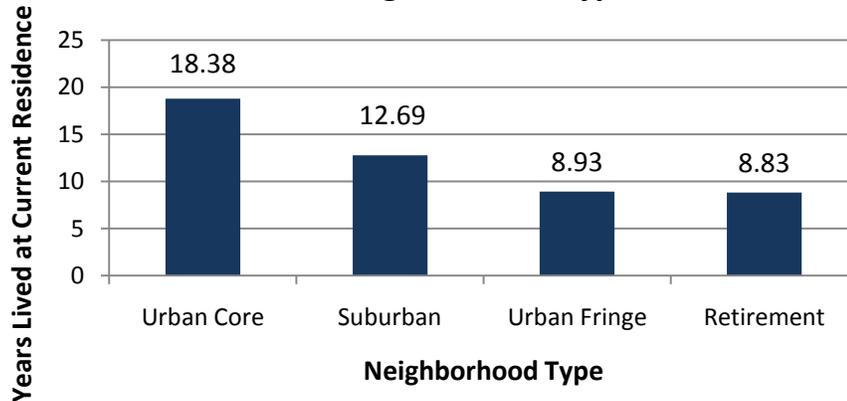
Most adults who live in the Las Vegas Valley were not born in here but instead migrated from another state or country. Only eight percent of survey respondents were born in the Las Vegas Valley compared to 75% born in a state other than Nevada and 16% born in another country.



How Long Have We Lived Here?

While many respondents have come from places other than Las Vegas, most have lived in the Valley a decade or more. Survey respondents have lived in their current homes on the average 12.1 years. One quarter of survey respondents have lived at their current residence for 16 years or more. Residents in Urban Core neighborhoods have lived here longest, followed by Suburban, Urban Fringe, and Retirement neighborhoods.

Length of Current Residence by Neighborhood Type



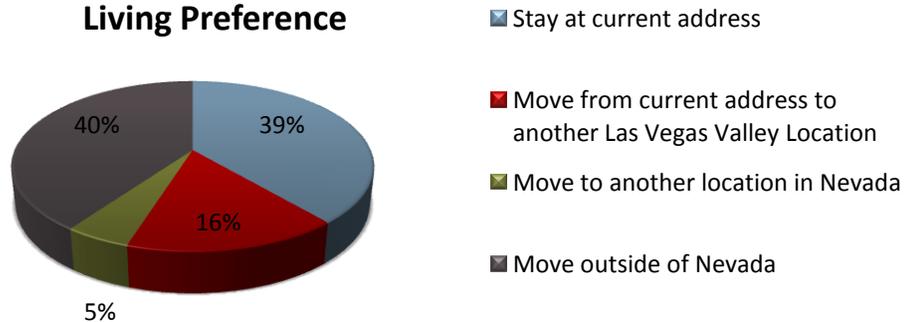
Where Did We Live Before?

Sixty-two percent of survey respondents moved to their current residence from elsewhere in the Las Vegas Valley, while 34% moved to their current residence from another state.

Where Do We Want To Live?

When asked if they could live anywhere they want, 40% of Las Vegas residents would leave Nevada altogether. Among those who want to stay in the Las Vegas area, 39% of residents would prefer to stay at their current address while 16% would move to another location in the Valley.

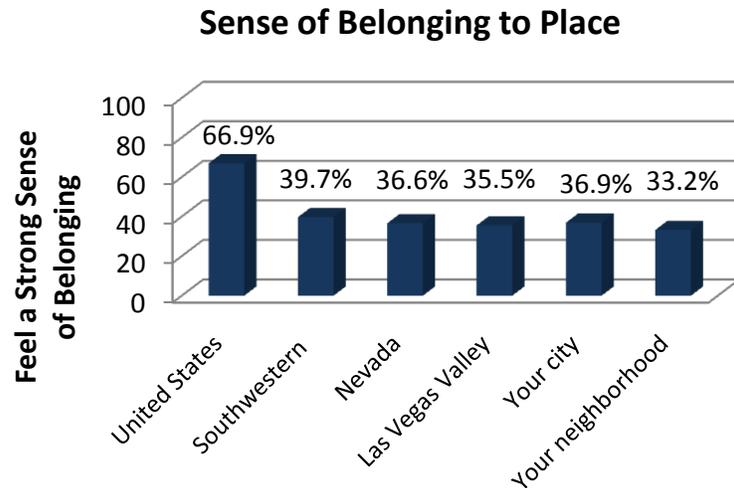
Living Preference



Attachment to place

Where do residents feel a strong sense of belonging?

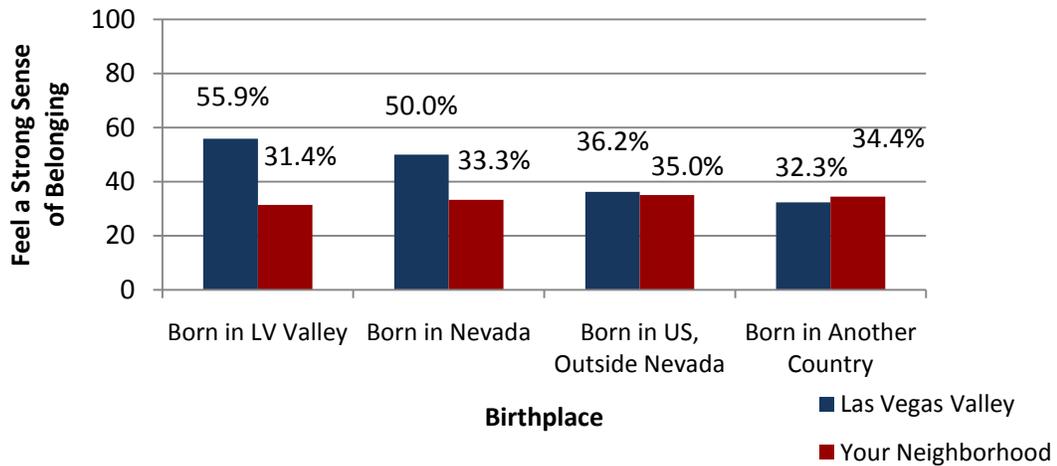
Las Vegas Valley residents have their strongest sense of attachment to the nation, and less so the southwest region. Respondents were asked if they had a strong, moderate, low, or no sense of belonging to various locales in the Las Vegas Valley. Less than 37% of Las Vegas Valley residents feel a strong sense of belonging to the city in which they live. Only 33.2% of respondents feel a strong sense of belonging to their neighborhood.



Does birthplace affect Valley residents' sense of belonging?

Attachment to place varies according to where people are from. Residents who were born in the Valley report the strongest sense of belonging to the Las Vegas Valley, followed by those born in the state of Nevada. Nearly 56% of residents born in the Las Vegas area feel a strong sense of belonging to the Las Vegas Valley. One-third (32.3%) of residents born in another country feel a strong sense of belonging to the Las Vegas Valley. When asked to identify their sense of belonging to their neighborhood, fewer respondents report a strong sense of attachment to their neighborhoods compared to the attachment they feel to the Las Vegas Valley. Among residents born in the Las Vegas Valley, slightly more than 31% feel a strong sense of belonging to their neighborhood. Although there is considerably less variation in neighborhood attachment by birthplace, the data suggest that residents feel a stronger sense of belonging to being a "Las Vegan" than being a "Neighbor" in their neighborhood.

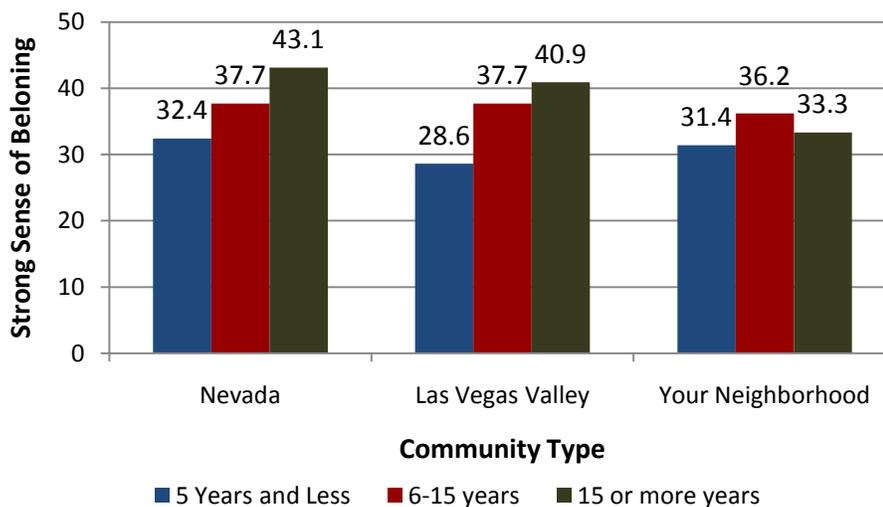
Birthplace and Sense of Belonging in LV Valley and Neighborhood



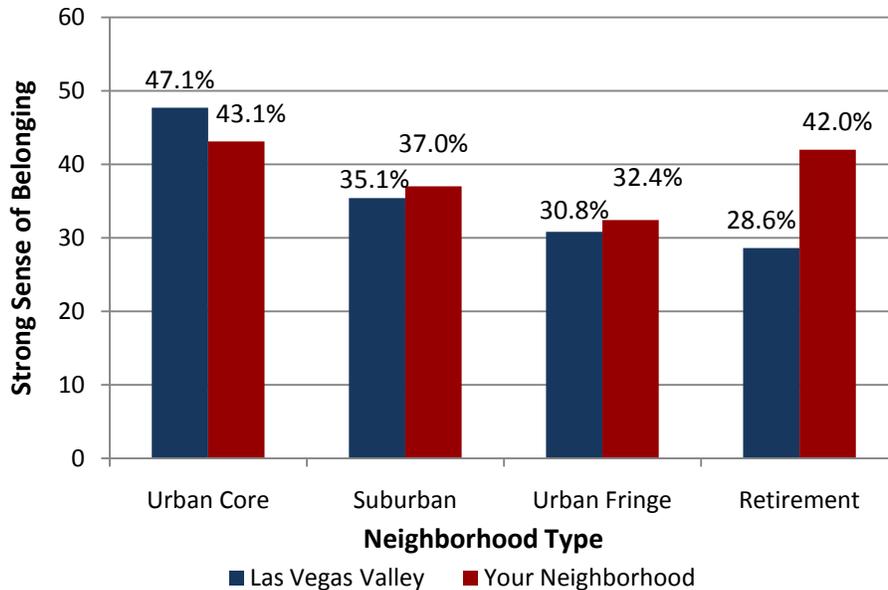
Does neighborhood location or length of residence affect sense of belonging?

There are spatial patterns to Las Vegas Valley resident's attachment to place. Residents living in the Urban Core neighborhoods report a stronger sense of belonging to their neighborhood and the Las Vegas Valley than residents who live in Suburban or Urban Fringe neighborhoods. More than 43% of respondent in Urban Core neighborhoods feel a strong sense of belonging to their neighborhood compared to only 32.4% of residents living in the Urban Fringe. Retirement neighborhood residents feel a much stronger sense of belonging to their neighborhood than to the Las Vegas Valley.

Strong Sense of Belonging to Community Type by Years of Current Residence



Neighborhood Type and Sense of Belonging in Las Vegas Valley and Neighborhood



Sense of belonging varies by length of residence. More respondents who have lived at their current residence the longest (15 or more years) report a strong sense of belonging to the state of Nevada (43.1%) and the Las Vegas Valley (40.9%) than residents with shorter times in their current home. Also, the share of residents who feel a strong sense of belonging to the State of Nevada and Las Vegas Valley is larger than the share that feels a strong sense of belonging to their neighborhood. Again, this pattern reaffirms that Valley residents may feel more attached to being a "Nevadan" and a "Las Vegan" than to being a "Neighbor."

Implications: Valley residents' stronger attachment to being a "Las Vegan" than a "neighbor" in a neighborhood raises important questions about civic involvement. If residents feel a limited sense of attachment to their neighbors and neighborhood, then they may be less willing to act together to solve neighborhood problems. This is a particular concern in the current budget crisis as municipalities are being forced to reduce some services and neighborhood volunteer groups may be needed to help with activities such as park maintenance or neighborhood cleanups.

Also, stronger neighborhood attachment could reduce transiency of residents, creating more long-term neighbors that we say we want and who can help to anchor sustainable communities.



"I have good neighbors, but I don't have a huge sense of belonging to my neighborhood."

LVMASS Focus Group Participant

Focus group highlight: Focus groups offered additional insight into the complicated sense of belonging and attachment in the Valley. Participants expressed pride in the Valley's growth and its status as an international tourist destination. But they also feel that one of the costs of development is transience and impermanence in their neighborhoods, which affects their sense of attachment and belonging. Focus group participants report that they are wary of getting too attached to their neighbors. They say that too many people have come to Las Vegas on only a temporary basis with no interest in establishing roots and giving back to the neighborhood.

"I think the longer you are in the neighborhood the more you care about it. So the people that come and go out of the neighborhood, I don't think they even give it a second thought. The people that have been there are the ones are staying there for years after this and they care about what is happening to it." - Focus Group Participant

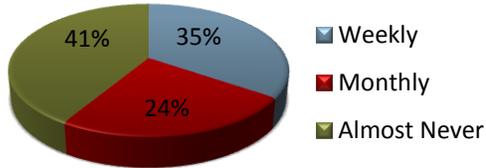
Residents' perception of transience is also bolstered by the economic recession recent that have produced a rash of foreclosures and vacancies in neighborhoods around the Valley.

Neighborhood Social Bonds

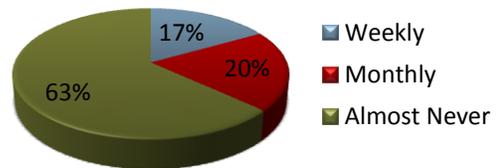
Do residents build strong bonds in their neighborhood?

Las Vegas Valley residents feel only moderately close to their neighbors. Forty-one percent of respondents indicate that they “almost never” visit with their neighbors and 63% “almost never” do favors for their neighbors. A majority of respondents (59%) visit their neighbors at least monthly, although only 37% do favors for their neighbors at least monthly. A full 70% of respondents feel that they can make their neighborhood a better place to live. Only seven percent say they can have no impact at all.

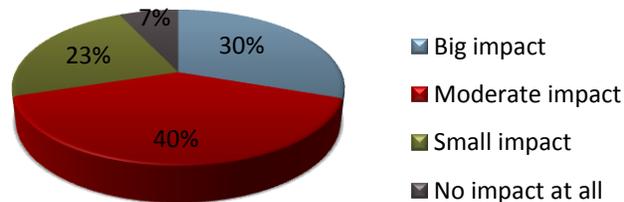
How often R visits neighbors



How often R or neighbors do favors for each other



R's impact on making neighborhood a better place to live



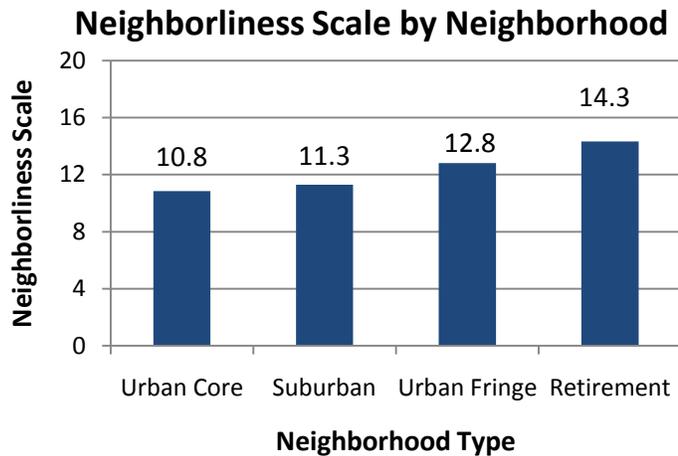
Who Has the Strongest Social Bonds in Las Vegas Neighborhoods?

Neighborhood social bonds are stronger as one moves from the Urban Core to Urban Fringe neighborhoods. We use a Neighborliness scale that combines 5 items measuring sense of trust and commonality with neighbors. Our scale ranges from a low of 0 to a maximum of 20 points. Higher scores on the scale represent stronger neighborliness and attachment to one's neighborhood and neighbors.

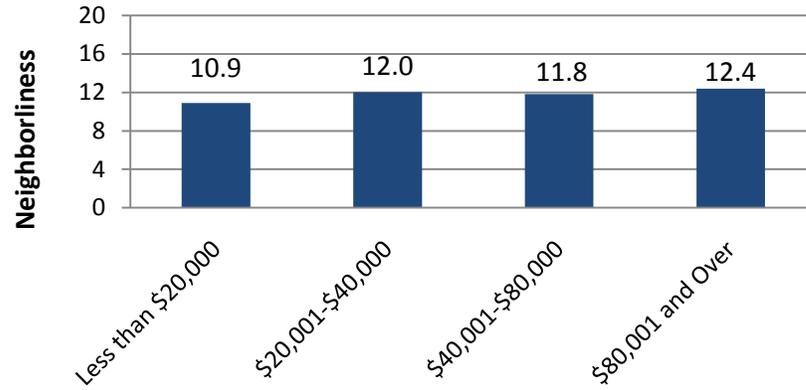
The mean score for all respondents is 11.98. The farther one moves outward from Urban Core neighborhoods, the more residents feel close to their neighbors. Respondents living in the Urban Fringe report a neighborliness scale score of 12.8 compared to 11.3 for Suburban respondents, and 10.8 for respondents who live in the Urban Core. Respondents in retirement neighborhoods report the highest neighborliness scores (14.3).

“This city is nothing like it was in those early years. People knew each other, there was a lot of bonding. I don’t believe today because of the growth and transient nature of neighborhoods.”

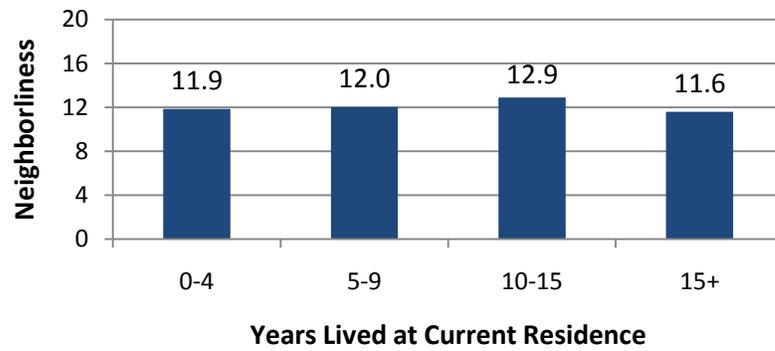
29-year City of Las Vegas resident



Household Income and Neighborliness



Duration of Current Residence and Neighborliness

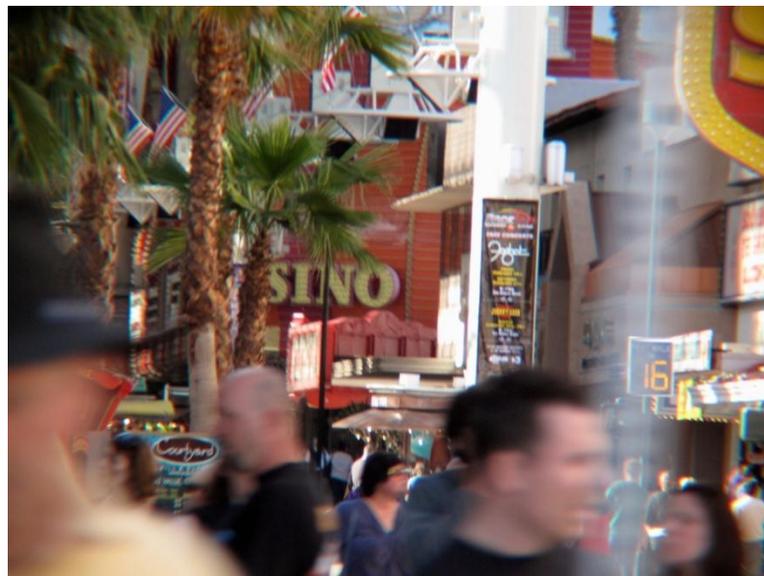


Focus group highlight: The fragile sense of neighborliness appears consistent across survey and focus group data. However, residents say that they do find some sense of comfort and trust toward neighbors whom they can regularly see, but do not know in any meaningful way. Focus group participants talked about their general trust of relative strangers whom they regularly notice walking their dog, pulling into their driveway, or working in their yard. They say they feel solace simply in knowing that others are consistently around and could probably be called upon for help in an emergency, should the need arise. Although, such neighborly connections are tenuous, they are something to hold onto in a 24-hour town with a busy and transient population.

Survey respondents who have lived at their current residence between 10 and 15 years, report the highest degree of neighborliness. However, the longest-term residents (15+ years) report the lowest degree of neighborliness. This pattern suggests that older residents may have withdrawn from neighborhood social contact due to high turnover rates, aging, and lifestyle changes. Several long-term focus group participants cited changes in household structure affecting their connection with neighbors, particularly the growth and departure of their children from their home.

Most focus group participants, but especially long term residents, long for stronger community bonds in their neighborhood. They identify some key points where they feel the most connection with others. Children are a key component for a vibrant neighborhood life and a social lubricant for neighborliness. Focus group participants also named parks and community centers as sources of neighborhood pride and focal public spaces where neighbors can connect with one another.

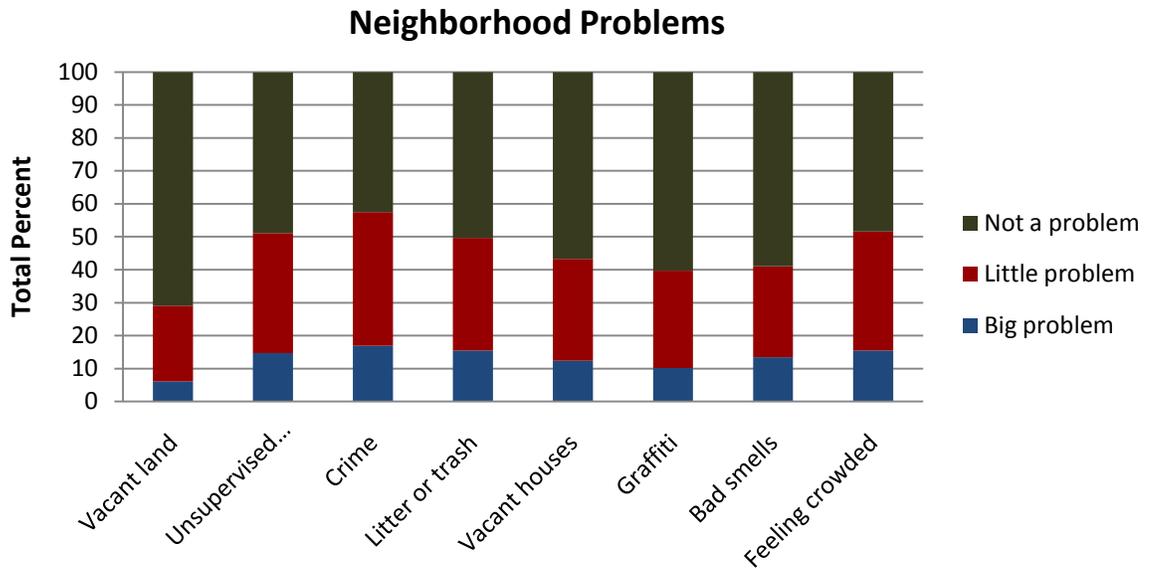
Policy makers might emphasize the upkeep of existing parks and community centers, while also exploring ways to create more public spaces and events where neighbors can connect.



Quality of life

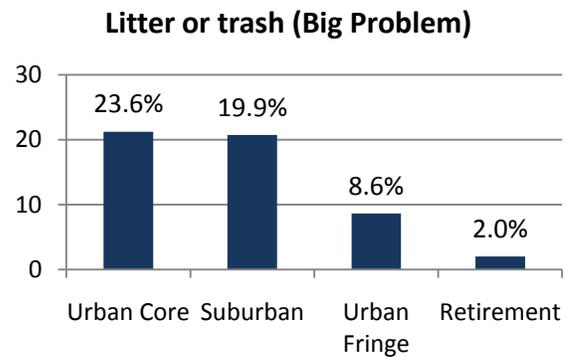
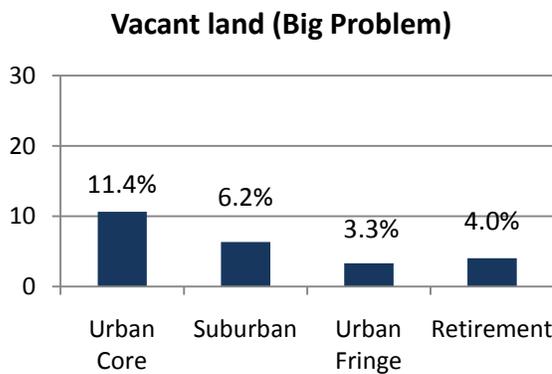
What problems to residents see in their neighborhoods?

Respondents were asked to identify problems in their neighborhoods. The problems identified by the largest proportion of respondents are, in order of rank: crime, feeling crowded, unsupervised teenagers, litter or trash, and vacant homes.

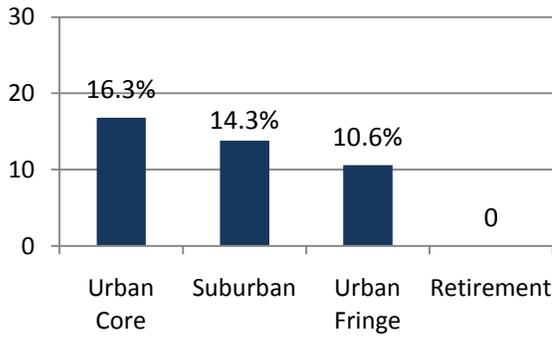


Do Neighborhood Problems Differ Across the Valley?

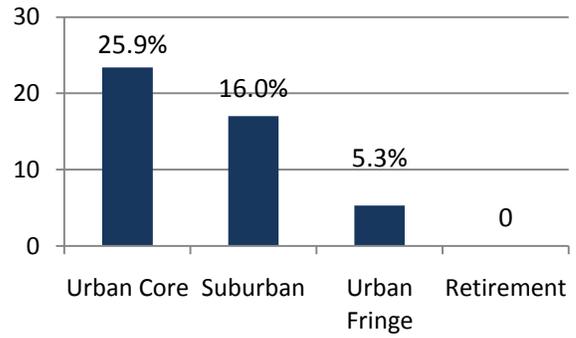
The kind of problems Valley residents perceive differs by neighborhood. Urban Core residents perceive more problems in their neighborhoods generally. Litter, vacant houses, bad smells, and feeling crowded are bigger problems for Urban Core residents than for residents in Suburban and Urban Fringe neighborhoods. Retirement neighborhoods appear to have the least problems overall, yet identify feeling crowded as their biggest problem.



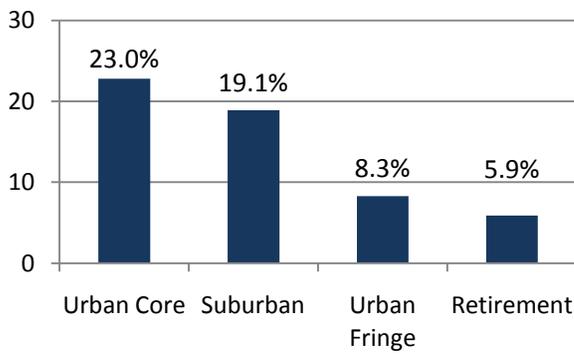
Vacant houses (Big Problem)



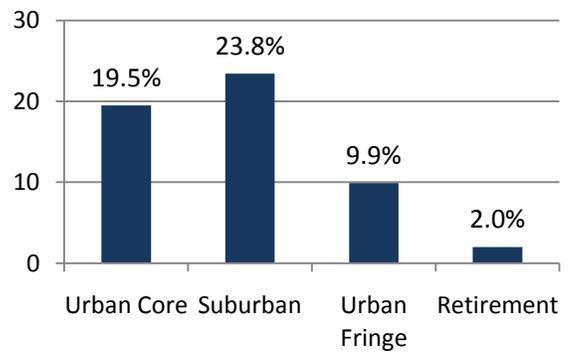
Bad smells (Big Problem)



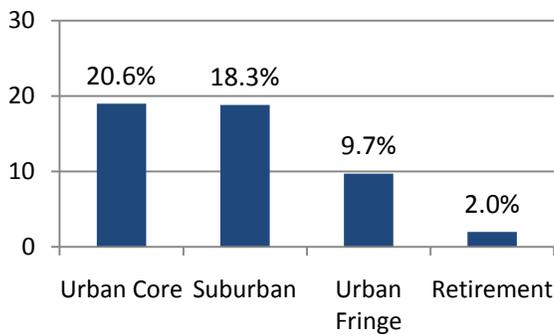
Feeling crowded (Big Problem)



Crime (Big Problem)



Unsupervised teenagers (Big Problem)

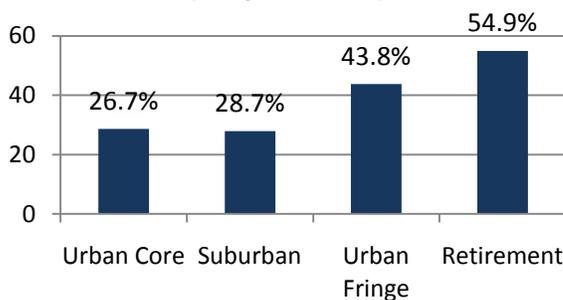


Neighborhood Type

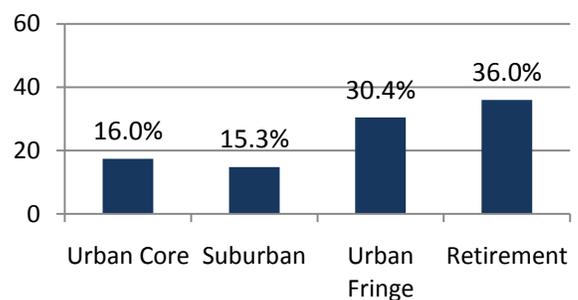
Does Neighborhood Satisfaction Differ Across the Valley?

Neighborhood satisfaction differs greatly across the Las Vegas Valley. We asked survey respondents their views on quality of life in the Las Vegas Valley today and what they predict their quality of life will be like in 10 years. In addition, we asked about their quality of life in their neighborhood. Respondents in newer Urban Fringe neighborhoods reported higher neighborhood satisfaction than respondents in Suburban or Urban Core neighborhoods. Respondents in Retirement neighborhoods reported the highest overall neighborhood satisfaction overall. Among all neighborhood satisfaction measures in which respondents are very satisfied, home value ranks the lowest.

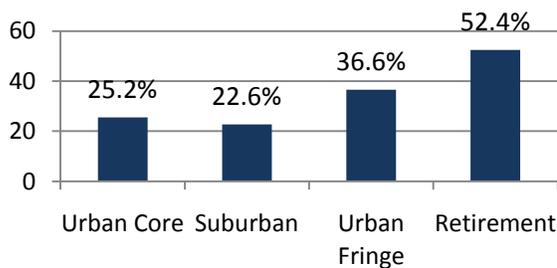
**Mixture of Housing Types
(Very Satisfied)**



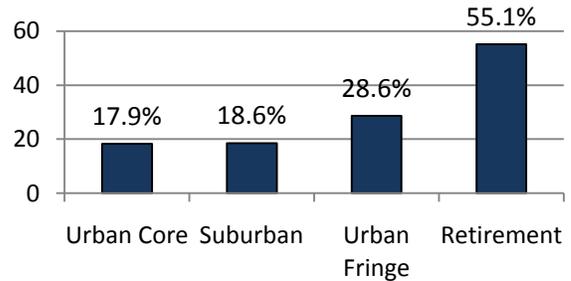
**Economic Value of Homes
(Very Satisfied)**



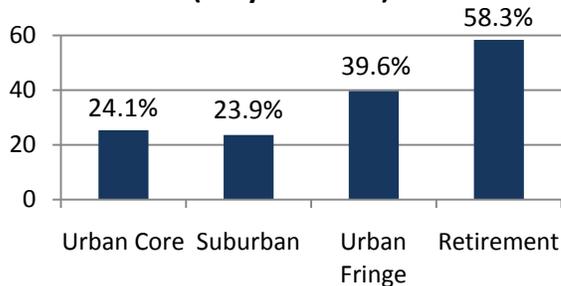
**Racial Mixture in Neighborhood
(Very Satisfied)**



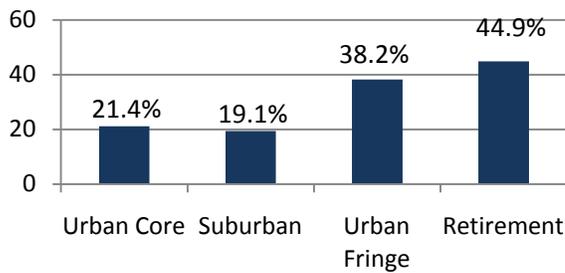
**Opportunities to Interact with
Neighbors (Very Satisfied)**



**Distance to Natural Areas
(Very Satisfied)**



Quality of Parks and Common Spaces (Very Satisfied)



“[The park renovation] has brought the neighborhood more to a community level. You know, we have the park and we are taking pride in the neighborhood again. And people are working on their houses again. And that shows an interest in the community. It shows an interest in what you want to put into the community. Just by doing what you need to do to make a better place to live. And it’s not just for you; it is for the entire community.”

Focus Group Participant

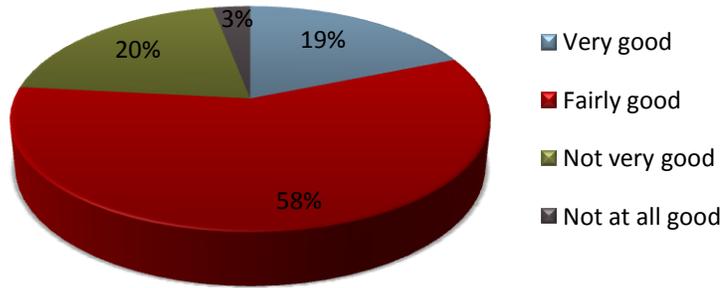
Focus group highlight: Focus group participants emphasized the importance of parks for neighborhood vitality and their sense of connection with others. They perceive neighborhoods with parks as more tight-knit, healthy, and stable. As one focus group participant said, “[Parks] are really important...so that the people in the neighborhoods who are trying to bring their neighborhood up to a better level, can continue to feel pride in the neighborhood.”

Focus group participants also perceive clear differences in the availability and aesthetic features of parks across the Las Vegas Valley. Specifically, they note that many newer Suburban and Urban Fringe neighborhoods have more parks that are better maintained and offer more recreational options than those in the Urban Core. Parks, along with community centers, provide residents opportunities to see and interact with neighbors. Valley residents see these public spaces as vital for creating sustainable communities with a high quality of life.

How do we see quality of life now and in the future?

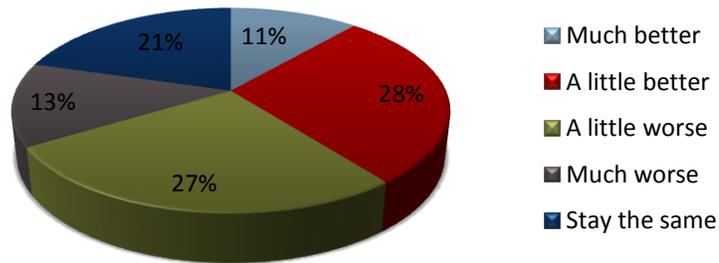
A large majority of respondents (77%) feel that their quality of life is at least “fairly good,” however only 19% of respondents report that their quality of life is “very good.”

Quality of Life in the Las Vegas Valley



Las Vegas Valley residents are more pessimistic about their quality of life over the next decade. Only 37% of respondents think that their quality of life will get better in the next ten years. Another 21% expect their quality of life to stay the same. Forty-percent believe their quality of life will get worse.

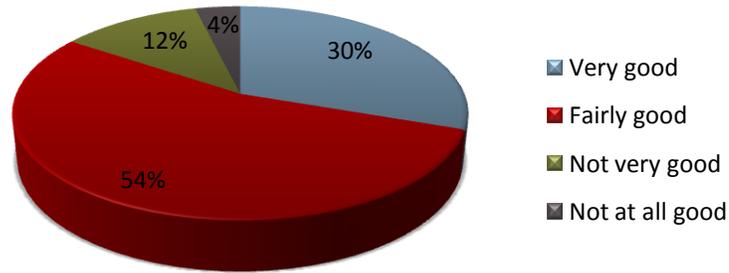
Quality of Life in the Las Vegas Valley (next 10 years)



Quality of Life in Neighborhood

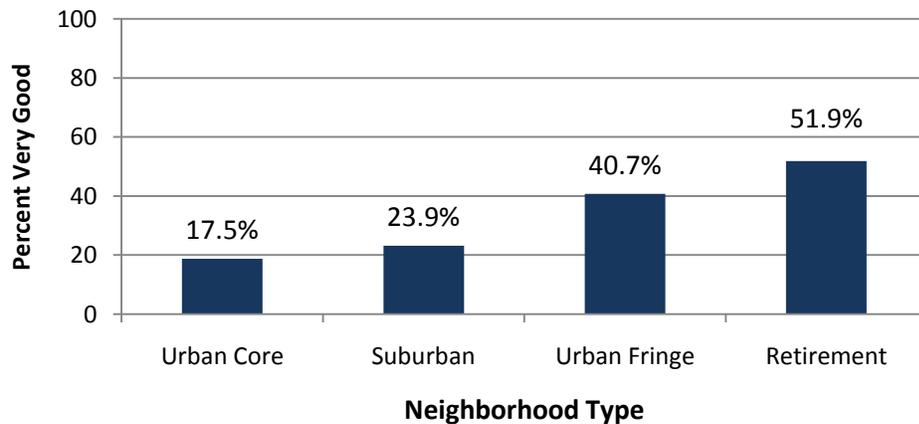
A large majority (84%) of survey respondents report at least a “fairly good” quality of life in their neighborhood. Only four percent of respondents say their quality of life in their neighborhood is not good at all.

Quality of Life in Neighborhood



There are clear differences across neighborhood types among respondents who say the quality of life in their neighborhood is “very good.” The percentage of respondents who say their neighborhood quality of life is very good drops the closer residents are to Urban Core neighborhoods.

Type of Neighborhood and Today's Quality of Life (Very Good)



Implications: A large majority of respondents appear to be fairly satisfied with their quality of life today, but less than one-fifth think it is very good. More than one-third of respondents are pessimistic about the future. Despite weak social bonds among neighbors generally in the Las Vegas Valley, a large majority of respondents report that their neighborhood quality of life is at least fairly good. This perception varies according to residential location. Urban Core residents are least likely to say that their neighborhood quality of life is very good. The “very good” rating increases as residential location moves away from the Urban Core. This finding reflects the same pattern as increases in neighborliness in neighborhood farther away from the Urban Core.

Further analysis of the 2010 Las Vegas Metropolitan Area Social Survey will provide additional answers about which household and neighborhood characteristics are important to Valley residents and how these perceptions affect quality of life satisfaction in different areas of the Las Vegas Valley.



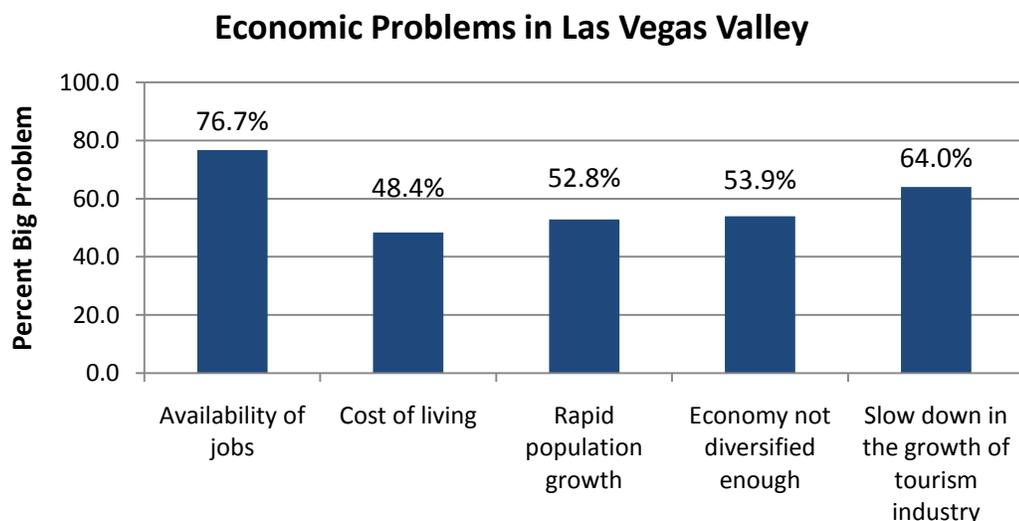
Economy & Jobs

Economic Problems

Participants were asked to identify the most problematic economic issues facing the Las Vegas Valley. Almost 77% of respondents report job availability as a big problem along with 64% who identified the slowdown in the growth of the tourism industry as a big problem. Fifty-four percent feel that the Las Vegas Valley economy is not diversified enough.

“You cannot have an economy or city built on one particular industry. I think they need to diversify and get something else into this area to support people, get the right jobs and tax base.”

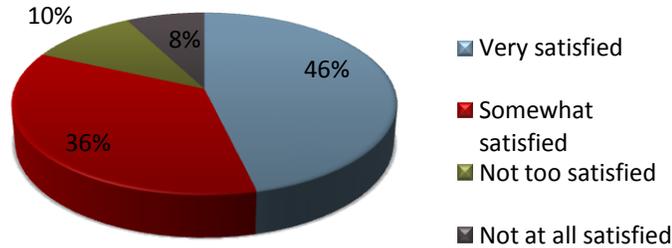
Focus Group Participant



How do Residents Feel About Their Jobs?

Although Las Vegas residents report that availability of jobs is a big problem in the Las Vegas Valley, 82% of residents who are currently employed say they are satisfied with their current jobs.

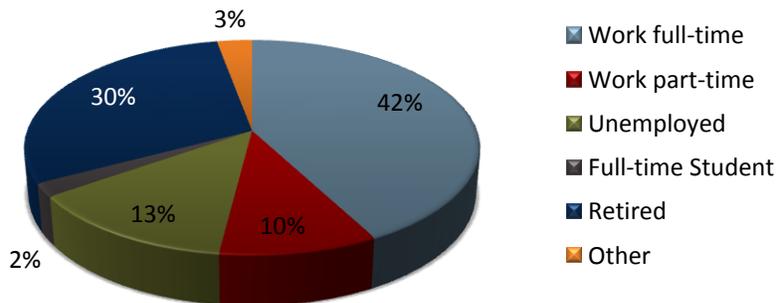
Job Satisfaction



Employment Profile

Full-time workers and retirees are well represented among LVMASS respondents. Fifty-two percent of respondents are employed, with 42% in full-time jobs and 10% holding part-time jobs. A full 30% of respondents are retired, 13% thirteen percent are unemployed, and 2% are full-time students.

Employment Profile



Focus group highlight: Focus group participants emphasized the same economic concerns as survey participants. They worried about the availability of jobs, slowdown in tourism, and economic diversification. In their discussions, focus group participants discussed jobs availability and tourism slowdown as symptoms of the bigger problem of lack of diversity in the Valley economy. They advocate serious efforts to encourage a diversified economy in the Las Vegas Valley. Participants expected political officials and business leaders to emphasize long-term planning to create a diversified economy that expands beyond gaming as a key component to creating a sustainable Las Vegas. As a part of this effort, participants noted efforts to develop cultural and educational opportunities in the City of Las Vegas downtown area, including opportunities associated with Union Park, the Smith Center, the 18b Arts District, and the Springs Preserve. Participants also cited the Cleveland Clinic and the Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health as crucial economic drivers to promote medical and technology sectors, along with specialty trades such as the furniture exposition business at the World Market Center. Finally, participants cited renewable energy and green technology as a potential growth sector for the Valley economy.

While advocating economic diversification, residents are also skeptical about its prospects, especially with the ongoing national economic recession. They perceive the Valley as singularly reliant on gaming for revenue and worry that not much will change. Several participants noted that political leaders have talked about economic diversification for years, while making little headway. They note that diversifying the economy must be part of comprehensive long-term planning for the Las Vegas Valley, but say that a lack of long-term planning for growth is at the heart of most Valley problems. Residents expect Las Vegas Valley leaders to place serious attention on diversification efforts to mitigate the cyclical effects of the gaming industry's boom-bust business cycle.



About the LVMASS Research Team

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Area Social Survey (LVMASS) project is a long-term collaborative research project located in the Department of Sociology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. LVMASS is headed by a research team of faculty and graduate students focusing on issues of urban sustainability. The current LVMASS project is designed to identify the socio-spatial distribution of knowledge, opinions, and perceptions about urban sustainability in the Las Vegas Metropolitan Area. The project focuses on how Las Vegas residents think about their urban environment across three dimensions of sustainability: 1) community and quality of life; 2) condition of the natural environment; 3) urban economic development.

LVMASS has three goals.

- 1) **To provide basic research on urban sustainability** in rapidly growing regions. It will provide data to UNLV researchers and their partners for assessing research questions about community formation, spatial variation in public attitudes, social integration, health, education, and quality of life, ecological attitudes, economic concerns, environmental opinions, and public desires for urban living.
- 2) **To provide data that will assist local and regional governments and planners** in crafting informed, strategic policy programs for social, economic, and ecological sustainability.
- 3) **To train future researchers** through the UNLV Department of Sociology graduate program in urban sociology.

The LVMASS team members includes:

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