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## **TRAFFIC TOPS LIST OF BAY AREA'S CONCERNS, BY WIDE MARGIN, BAY AREA COUNCIL POLL SHOWS**

*Traffic Problem is Worst in North Bay*

*Intense Crime Concerns in Alameda Bump "Economy" out of Third Spot in Overall Bay Area*

**BAY AREA, March 1, 2007** — Bay Area residents think traffic is the most important problem facing the region, with 33 percent identifying it as the region's top concern in the 2007 *Bay Area Council Poll* of 600 residents released today. Traffic concerns were particularly acute in the North Bay counties of Marin, Sonoma, Napa and Solano, where 41 percent said traffic was their biggest problem.

In the first of a series of results, the *Council Poll* found that housing was second in the list of concerns with 11 percent, an eight point drop from last year, perhaps due to falling housing prices. The issue of crime bumped "the economy" out of third place among respondents at 10 percent. The results of the *Bay Area Council Poll* help the Bay Area Council develop its annual work plan, plus help guide the region's policymakers in their decision-making.

"Residents think traffic is horrible, and they are right," said Jim Wunderman the president and CEO of the Bay Area Council. "The Bay Area holds the ignominious honor of the second worst traffic in the entire country. That said, voters here should be proud that they have transformed their frustration into action, passing county transportation sales tax measures, and last November, passing an enormous transportation bond measure. In the next few years, literally billions of dollars will flow to Bay Area traffic improvement projects. If we are smart about those investments, residents across our region will soon feel tangible traffic relief."

While traffic is reported as the top problem everywhere, secondary concerns vary across the region. In Alameda County, crime is the second worst problem, cited by 19 percent of the residents there versus 10 percent Bay Area-wide. In San Francisco, the second biggest problem is the economy and unemployment at 17 percent, followed uniquely by homelessness as the third biggest problem at 14 percent. In Contra Costa the second worst problem, according to residents is pollution, cited by 14 percent of residents.

### **These are the "Good Times"**

Despite their concerns, a very optimistic 78 percent of respondents say that overall the Bay Area is doing very well or somewhat well. The improved outlook may be driven by the large opinion shift on the Bay Area economy. Whereas two years ago 61 percent of respondents said the region was in bad economic times, today only 29 percent feel this way, and 53% percent say these are good economic times. Asked about the next 12 months, a mere 16 percent predict a worse economy.

### **Approval of Governor and Legislature Way Up**

Possible due to last year's successful bi-partisan infrastructure bond passage largely targeted at Bay Area resident's chief concerns, poll respondents rewarded Governor Schwarzenegger and the California legislature with high marks. Whereas only 29 percent of respondents approved on the Governor last year, today 54 percent of the Bay Area likes how he is handling his job and 30 percent disapprove. Similarly, the state legislature's approval rating jumped 14 points to a 43 percent approval rating and a 37 percent disapproval rating. Positive approval ratings could help with term limit reform measures in 2008.

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### **About the Bay Area Poll**

A total of 600 residents of the nine-county Bay Area were surveyed in English and Spanish by Field Research Corporation during the period of January 8-14, 2007. Survey respondents were selected using a random probability sampling technique that gives all residents with telephones (listed or not) an equal chance of being selected for the survey. The sample was stratified to obtain representative samples in each of six Bay Area regions: Alameda County, Contra Costa County, San Francisco County, San Mateo County, Santa Clara County and the North Bay counties of Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma. After the completion of interviewing, the sample was weighted to conform to actual population estimates of the nine-county Bay Area. Findings are subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 4 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

### **About the Bay Area Council**

Founded in 1945, the Bay Area Council ([www.bayareacouncil.org](http://www.bayareacouncil.org)) develops and drives regional public policy initiatives and researches critical infrastructure issues. Led by CEOs, the Bay Area Council presents a strong, united voice for hundreds of major employers throughout the Bay Area region whom employ more than 501,000 workers, or 1 of every six private sector employees in the Bay Area..