

The Star-Ledger/**Eagleton-Rutgers Poll**

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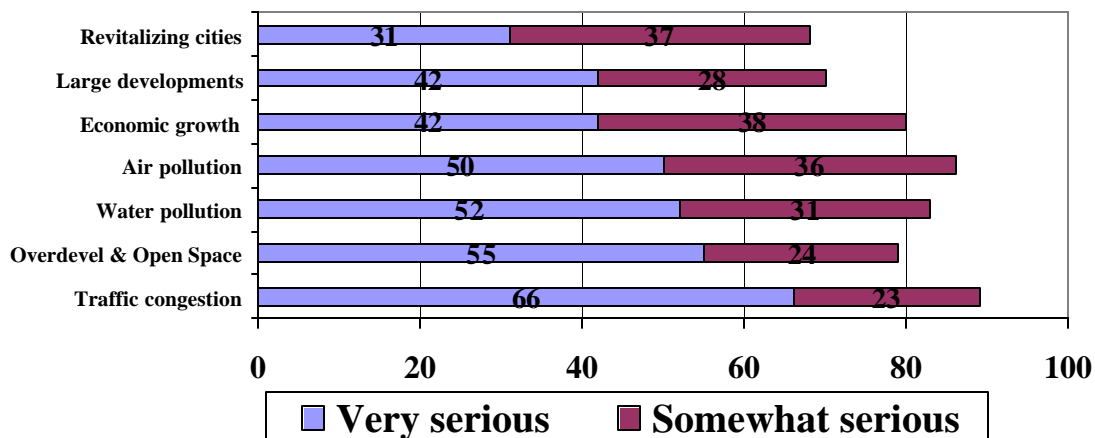
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S P R A W L :

NEW JERSEYANS DISLIKE THE PROBLEMS, AND THE SOLUTIONS

Most people in New Jersey dislike the effects of sprawl—traffic congestion, lack of open spaces and farmland, deteriorating air and water quality. However there is no consensus on what to do about it. State residents are also concerned about keeping local control of development, worried about limiting economic growth, and divided about whether to tax themselves to limit sprawl.

These are among the main findings of a statewide sample of 804 New Jersey adults interviewed by telephone earlier this month. The scientific survey was conducted by the *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* between September 3 and 8, and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.



The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll • Eagleton Institute of Politics

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Many of the problems associated with sprawl are of great concern to New Jersey residents, led by traffic congestion. Two-thirds say this is a “very serious” problem facing the state. Half of all state residents view each of three other problems as very serious: over development and the lack of open space (55%), water pollution (52%) and air pollution (50%). While four-in-ten are similarly concerned with the building of large residential developments (42%), the same number is concerned with promoting economic growth (42%). Finally, far fewer believe that revitalizing city centers is a “very serious” problem in the state (31%).

While policy makers throughout the state have been wrestling with a plan to manage suburban sprawl for many years, only one-in-five say they have ever heard of “the ‘New Jersey State Plan’ to manage growth and development.” However, far more approve (71%) than disapprove (17%) when told of the plan’s goals, which seeks to steer growth to existing population centers such as cities and towns in order to limit development in farming communities and of open spaces. The remaining 12 percent offer no opinion.

This almost-consensual support for the goals of the plan fades when the public is asked to consider a variety of tradeoffs, some of which may be necessary to implement the plan effectively.

- Support for the plan dropped to a much narrower 48 percent favor to 40 percent oppose if it meant that “people like you would not be able to build or move into new houses in undeveloped parts of New Jersey.”
- The tradition of “local control” in New Jersey is also an issue. While 40 percent would be willing to see regional control of growth and development to limit sprawl, a bare majority of 51 percent do not want to give up their town or city’s control of growth. Although 60 percent say they would favor giving up *some* of their town’s control in order to preserve more open space, 31 percent would oppose ceding even partial control.
- The public is evenly split on which is the more important of two potentially competing values: limiting new development on open space (44%), or preserving the right of property owners to sell their land as they see fit (47%). Opinion in the state is strongly divided by region. The percentage favoring limiting development includes 56 percent of those living in central New Jersey, 42% of those in the north, and just 38 percent of those living in the southern part of the state.

While voters have at times approved of bond issues to preserve open spaces—in effect taxing themselves to fund land acquisition, even that idea does not enjoy widespread support. Statewide, just 54 percent tell interviewers they would favor “a slight tax to buy up and preserve open land so that it would not be developed.” Another 41 percent would oppose such a tax, while the remainder offer no opinion. Interesting, this is one area where voting really matters: while 56 percent of registered voters favor such a measure, only 45 percent of those not registered to vote do so.

And, New Jerseyans are equally divided about the idea of a potential tax on new homes sold to fund land preservation—45 percent favor, 45 percent oppose and the remainder are uncertain.

Cliff Zukin, director of the Rutgers-based poll commented, “One of the reasons sprawl has seemed to be such an intractable issue in New Jersey is that it involves competing values that people want. On the one hand, we have a state of crowded environmentalists, who really want relief from congestion and over-development. On the other, there is not a consensus to pay out-of-pocket for relief, and we have a strong tradition of home rule and local control. This combination makes for a very tough public policy problem.”

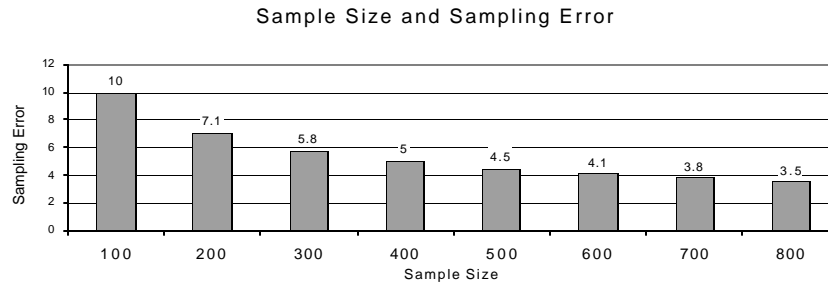
The poll also finds the public to be concerned about the economic impacts of limiting development. When faced with the choice between limiting development and population growth, or creating more jobs and economic growth, more currently choose the latter by a margin of 63 to 30 percent. More of those at the lower rungs of the income ladder and those living in urban areas express greater support for the economic growth position.

And, while urban revitalization was at the bottom of residents concerns, more say that investing in already developed inner-city areas that need repair should take priority over buying up and preserving open spaces—by a margin of 64 to 27 percent. Those living in urban areas are more supportive of this policy; Blacks and Hispanics in the state are more likely to express this view (81%) than are whites (59%).

In assessing a number of patterns in the data Zukin noted, “It tends to be the better educated and more affluent and white New Jerseyans who are the most concerned about limiting sprawl and most willing to pay the costs to stop new development. Ironically, these are often the same people who have fueled this growth in the past.”

BACKGROUND MEMO – (EP138-6) September 29, 2002

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll was conducted by telephone from September 3 to September 8 with a scientifically selected random sample of 804 New Jersey adults. All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The sampling error is ± 4.2 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey residents found that traffic congestion is a very serious problem in this state, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 45.8 and 54.2 percent (50 ± 4.2) had all state residents been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported for residents of North, Central and South Jersey, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. The following chart shows the relationship between sample size and sampling error.



Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects. The verbatim wording of all questions asked is reproduced in this background memo. The sample has been stratified based on county and the data have been weighted on age and education to insure an accurate proportional representation of the state. The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

“I’m going to read you a list of things different people are concerned about in the state. Please just tell me if YOU think each is a very serious, somewhat serious, or not too serious problem.”
 (A. Traffic congestion, B. Water pollution in New Jersey, C. Overdevelopment and the lack of open spaces and farmland, D. Air pollution in New Jersey, E. The building of large residential developments, F. Revitalizing city centers, G. Promoting economic growth) [SP1.]

	Very serious	Somewhat serious	Not too serious	DK	Total	(n)
<u>Traffic congestion</u>	66%	23%	11%	1%	101%	(804)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>						
--North	65	23	11	1	100	(325)
--Central	72	23	5	--	100	(221)
--South	64	23	13	--	100	(253)
<i><u>By Urbanity</u></i>						
--Urban Area	66	22	11	1	100	(173)
--Established Suburb	60	25	15	--	100	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	72	21	7	1	101	(333)
<u>Water pollution in NJ</u>	52%	31%	14%	3%	100%	(804)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>						
--North	50	32	15	3	100	(325)
--Central	51	34	12	4	101	(221)
--South	57	28	12	3	100	(253)
<i><u>By Urbanity</u></i>						
--Urban Area	57	25	13	4	99	(173)
--Established Suburb	48	36	15	1	100	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	53	31	14	3	101	(333)
<i><u>Past Surveys</u></i>						
June 1993	55	29	13	3	100	(801)

	<u>Very serious</u>	<u>Somewhat serious</u>	<u>Not too serious</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>Over development & the lack of open spaces and farmland</u>	55%	24%	16%	4%	99%	(804)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>						
--North	48	25	20	6	99	(325)
--Central	63	24	11	2	100	(221)
--South	61	22	15	2	100	(253)
<i><u>By Urbanity</u></i>						
--Urban Area	47	22	21	10	100	(173)
--Established Suburb	59	24	15	2	100	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	60	26	13	1	100	(333)
<u>Air pollution in NJ</u>	50%	36%	13%	1%	100%	(804)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>						
--North	47	39	13	--	99	(325)
--Central	55	33	10	2	100	(221)
--South	51	35	12	1	99	(253)
<i><u>By Urbanity</u></i>						
--Urban Area	55	32	13	--	100	(173)
--Established Suburb	49	39	11	1	100	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	48	37	13	2	100	(333)
<i><u>Past Surveys</u></i>						
June 1993	49	38	12	1	100	(801)
<u>Building of large residential developments</u>	42%	28%	26%	3%	99%	(804)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>						
--North	36	28	32	4	100	(325)
--Central	55	25	17	3	100	(221)
--South	42	30	25	3	100	(253)
<i><u>By Urbanity</u></i>						
--Urban Area	32	26	38	4	100	(173)
--Established Suburb	44	26	26	4	100	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	49	31	17	2	99	(333)
<u>Revitalizing city centers</u>	31%	37%	22%	10%	100%	(804)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>						
--North	32	36	22	11	101	(325)
--Central	28	42	20	10	100	(221)
--South	33	34	23	9	99	(253)
<i><u>By Urbanity</u></i>						
--Urban Area	28	38	21	13	100	(173)
--Established Suburb	33	38	23	6	100	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	33	36	21	11	101	(333)

	<u>Very serious</u>	<u>Somewhat serious</u>	<u>Not too serious</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>Promoting economic growth</u>	42%	38%	15%	5%	100%	(804)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>						
--North	40	41	15	4	100	(325)
--Central	35	43	20	3	101	(221)
--South	50	30	13	7	100	(253)
<i><u>By Urbanity</u></i>						
--Urban Area	38	40	15	6	99	(173)
--Established Suburb	41	37	17	5	100	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	45	37	13	5	100	(333)

“If you had to choose, which do you think should be a bigger priority in New Jersey – buying up and preserving open space, OR investing in already developed areas that need repair, such as inner cities?” [SP2.]

	<u>Preserving open space</u>	<u>Investing in developed areas</u>	<u>(VOL) Neither</u>	<u>(VOL) Both</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2002	27%	64%	--	6%	3%	100%	(804)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>							
--North	25	65	--	6	3	99	(325)
--Central	32	59	1	7	1	100	(221)
--South	25	67	--	5	3	100	(253)
<i><u>Race</u></i>							
White	31	59	--	7	3	100	(623)
Black / Hispanic	15	81	--	2	2	100	(133)
<i><u>By Urbanity</u></i>							
--Urban Area	17	77	--	4	2	100	(173)
--Established Suburb	28	62	1	6	4	101	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	34	56	--	8	2	100	(333)
<i><u>Past Surveys</u></i>							
January 2001	23	65	1	8	3	100	(803)

“Some people say that restricting population growth will hurt the state’s economy. If you had to chose between limiting development and population growth, OR creating more jobs and economic growth, which you choose?” [SP3]

	Restrict population growth	Job creation/ More economic development	(VOL) Both/Neither	DK	Total	(n)
September 2002	30%	63%	2%	5%	100%	(804)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>						
--North	26	68	2	3	99	(325)
--Central	35	57	2	6	100	(221)
--South	31	62	--	6	99	(253)
<i><u>Income</u></i>						
--Under \$35,000	26	68	2	4	100	(131)
--\$35,000 to \$70,000	28	66	2	4	100	(249)
--\$70,000 or more	38	57	1	4	100	(338)
<i><u>By Urbanity</u></i>						
--Urban Area	22	72	3	4	101	(173)
--Established Suburb	33	64	1	3	101	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	34	56	2	8	100	(333)

“Which do you think is more important – limiting development on open space or preserving the right of the property owners to sell their land to as they see fit?” [SP4]

	Limiting development	Right of <u>property</u> owners	Both/ Neither	DK	Total	(n)
September 2002	44%	47%	2%	7%	100%	(804)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>						
--North	42	48	2	8	100	(325)
--Central	56	38	--	6	100	(221)
--South	38	54	2	6	100	(253)
<i><u>By Urbanity</u></i>						
--Urban Area	37	52	1	10	100	(173)
--Established Suburb	42	49	2	7	100	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	52	43	2	4	101	(333)

“Would you favor or oppose a slight tax increase to buy up and preserve open land so that it would not be developed?” [SP5]

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Depends how much</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2002	54%	41%	2%	4%	101%	(804)
<i><u>Registered to vote</u></i>						
--Yes	56	38	1	4	99	(622)
--No	45	49	3	3	100	(182)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>						
--North	56	40	--	4	100	(325)
--Central	58	37	3	2	100	(221)
--South	47	46	3	3	99	(253)
<i><u>By Urbanity</u></i>						
--Urban Area	52	43	1	4	100	(173)
--Established Suburb	53	43	1	3	100	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	56	38	2	4	100	(333)

“Would you favor or oppose a tax on new homes sold in order to preserve open land?” [SP6]

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Depends how much</u>	<u>DK/Refuse</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2002	45%	45%	1%	9%	100%	(804)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>						
--North	45	46	--	9	100	(325)
--Central	50	39	3	7	99	(221)
--South	39	51	1	9	100	(253)
<i><u>By Urbanity</u></i>						
--Urban Area	44	43	--	13	100	(173)
--Established Suburb	43	49	2	7	101	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	47	44	2	7	100	(333)

“Have you ever heard of something called the “New Jersey State Plan” to manage growth and development?” [SP7]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2002	20%	79%	1%	100%	(804)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>					
--North	16	83	1	100	(325)
--Central	19	80	1	100	(221)
--South	27	71	2	100	(253)
<i><u>By Urbanity</u></i>					
--Urban Area	17	83	1	101	(173)
--Established Suburb	24	75	1	100	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	20	79	1	100	(333)
<i><u>Past Surveys</u></i>					
January 2001	28	68	4	100	(803)

“The New Jersey State Plan seeks to steer growth and development to existing population centers, such as towns and cities, in order to limit growth and development in farming communities and open spaces. Do you approve or disapprove of this part of the plan?” [SP8]

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2002	71%	17%	12%	100%	(804)
<i>By Region</i>					
--North	70	18	12	100	(325)
--Central	73	15	12	100	(221)
--South	70	18	12	100	(253)
<i>By Urbanity</i>					
--Urban Area	68	17	15	100	(173)
--Established Suburb	70	20	10	100	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	75	14	11	100	(333)
<i>Past Surveys</i>					
January 2001	67	22	10	99	(803)

“And would you favor or oppose this plan if it meant that people like you would not be able to build or move into new houses in undeveloped parts of New Jersey?” [SP9]

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2002	48%	40%	11%	99%	(804)
<i>Registered to vote</i>					
--Yes	51	38	12	101	(622)
--No	42	48	10	100	(182)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>					
--Democrat	41	47	12	100	(257)
--Independent	55	37	8	100	(212)
--Republican	52	35	13	100	(227)
<i>Gender</i>					
--Male	54	37	8	99	(379)
--Female	43	43	14	100	(425)
<i>Race</i>					
--White	52	35	13	100	(623)
--Black / Hispanic	39	56	5	100	(133)
<i>Education</i>					
--HS or Less	42	45	14	101	(208)
--Some college	47	45	8	100	(231)
--College grad	62	29	9	100	(365)
<i>Income</i>					
--Under \$35,000	35	49	16	100	(131)
--\$35,000 to \$70,000	50	44	6	100	(249)
--\$70,000 or more	60	30	9	99	(338)
<i>By Region</i>					
--North	48	41	11	100	(325)
--Central	59	32	10	101	(221)
--South	42	46	12	100	(253)
<i>By Urbanity</i>					
--Urban Area	44	46	10	100	(173)
--Established Suburb	45	45	11	101	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	56	33	12	101	(333)

“Some people feel that **growth and development** should be controlled at the local level because town and cities ought to have the right to **encourage or discourage growth and development** within their borders. Other people feel that because growth and development in one community often has an effect on neighboring communities, growth and development ought to be controlled at the regional level. Which view comes closer to your own?” [SP 10]

	<u>Local</u>	<u>Regional</u>	(VOL) <u>Other</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2002	51%	40%	--	8%	99%	(804)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>						
--North	49	43	1	7	100	(325)
--Central	54	40	1	5	100	(221)
--South	52	38	--	10	100	(253)
<i><u>By Urbanity</u></i>						
--Urban Area	50	40	--	9	99	(173)
--Established Suburb	52	39	--	8	99	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	51	41	--	7	99	(333)
<i><u>Past Surveys</u></i>						
January 1988	48	43	3	5	99	(800)

“Would you favor or oppose giving up some of your local town’s control of growth and development in order to preserve more open space?” [SP 11]

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September 2002	60%	31%	9%	100%	(804)
<i><u>By Region</u></i>					
--North	59	31	9	99	(325)
--Central	66	27	6	99	(221)
--South	56	33	10	99	(253)
<i><u>By Urbanity</u></i>					
--Urban Area	54	36	10	100	(173)
--Established Suburb	61	29	10	100	(296)
--Expanding Burb/Rural	64	29	7	100	(333)