

**2003 Quality of Life Survey  
Beaumont**

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## **Summary**

Beaumont is considered a good place to live. According to the voters, the quality of life has improved, and is getting even better.

The biggest problems facing Beaumont are unemployment and lack of leadership among city officials.

Air quality is perceived as poor, and is not necessarily thought to be improving.

Though the voters do not tend to rely on public transportation, they support more emphasis placed on providing public transportation by public officials.

Drug abuse in one's neighborhood is not considered to be a big problem.

The voters are divided in their evaluation of Beaumont's educational system.

The voters are willing to give the entertainment complex more time before they pass judgment on it.

## **The Survey**

The Center for Public Policy Studies conducted its first quality of life survey. The survey was of registered voters in Beaumont. 234 registered voters were surveyed by phone between October 6 and October 13. Survey results provide a picture of how voters view the general quality of life in Beaumont. Results also highlight problems that are of greatest concern to voters.

The results of this survey represent the perceptions and opinions of registered voters in Beaumont. The results are not objective measures of the quality of life or of any government service.

## **Quality of Life**

Voters in Beaumont are satisfied with the present quality of life, and are optimistic about the future. More voters than not believe that the quality of life has improved and will continue to get better.

Registered voters are quite satisfied with the quality of life in Beaumont. When asked how satisfied they are, 86% said they are satisfied or very satisfied [Table 1].

In another general measure of the quality of life, voters were asked if they thought Beaumont had become a better or a worse place to live over the last 5 years. 51% said that Beaumont had become a better place to live, 14% thought that Beaumont had become a worse place to live, and 35% said that there had been no change [Table 2].

In a third general measure of the quality of life, voters were asked if they thought that Beaumont would become a better or a worse place to live over the next 5 years. 57% said that Beaumont would become a better place to live, 15% expect Beaumont to become a worse place to live, and 29% believe there will be no change [Table 3].

## **Biggest Problems Facing Beaumont**

Opinions about problems facing Beaumont are varied, though over one-third of voters say that unemployment and a sluggish economy, along with lack of leadership by city officials are major problems.

The most often mentioned biggest problems facing Beaumont are lack of jobs and the economy (18%), lack of leadership (17%), attitudes of fellow citizens (comments about people's unwillingness to change or get along with one another) (10%), city financial problems (9%), and education (8%) [Table 4].

## Issues

In addition to the general quality of life, voters were asked their opinions on a series of issues, some specific to Beaumont, others relevant for our region. The issues were air quality, public transportation, substance abuse, education and the entertainment complex

According to voters, air quality is not good and has not improved in recent years. Most voters (60%) rate air quality in Southeast Texas as poor [Table 5], and most (73%) believe that air quality either has gotten worse or has not changed over the last 5 years [Table 6].

A majority of voters (61%) favor public officials placing more emphasis on providing public transportation [Table 7]. This finding is interesting in light of the fact that only a small portion of voters say that they use public transportation (5% according to survey results). An implication that can be drawn is that public transportation might be more widely used if it were made even more available.

Drug abuse is not considered a major problem. 60% of voters said that drugs were not a problem in their neighborhood [Table 8]. The perception that drug abuse is not a major problem is supported by responses to the open-ended question about the biggest problem facing Beaumont today, noted above, where drugs are mentioned by only 2% of voters.

Voters are split in their evaluation of the educational system in Beaumont. Slightly over half rate the educational system as good or excellent (54%), while just under half rate it as fair or poor (46%) [Table 9].

Despite what might be considered some recent negative commentary about the entertainment complex, its proponents may have some "breathing room" among voters. Though not necessarily enjoying a high level of approval, it appears that voters are willing to give the complex time to prove itself. 43% say that the complex needs to be given more time before people can make a judgment about it. 18% think it is a good idea the complex was built, while 39% think it is not a good idea to have built the complex [Table 10].

Table 1: Quality of Life – Present

*How satisfied are you with the quality of life in Beaumont?*

Very Satisfied	18%
Satisfied	68%
Dissatisfied	12%
Very Dissatisfied	3%

(Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Sample error is 6.5 percentage points.)

Table 2: Quality of Life – Past

*Thinking back over the last 5 years, would you say that Beaumont has become a better place to live, or has Beaumont become a worse place to live, or has there been no change?*

Better	51%
Worse	14%
No Change	35%

Table 3: Quality of Life – Future

*And thinking ahead over the next 5 years, do you think that Beaumont will become a better place to live, or will Beaumont become a worse place to live, or will there be no change?*

Better	57%
Worse	15%
No Change	29%

Table 4: Biggest Problem

*What do you think is the biggest problem facing Beaumont today?*

Unemployment/Economy	18%
City Leaders	17%
Citizen Attitudes	10%
City Finances	9%
Education	8%
Environment	6%
Taxes	5%

(Listed are those items that received at least 5% of responses.)

Table 5: Air Quality – Present

*Would you say that air quality in Southeast Texas is generally good, or would you say that air quality in Southeast Texas is generally poor?*

Good	40%
Poor	60%

Table 6: Air Quality – Past

*And thinking back over the last 5 years, would you say that the air quality in Southeast Texas has gotten better, or has it gotten worse, or has there been no change?*

Better	26%
Worse	29%
No Change	44%



Table 7: Public Transportation

*Do you think that local officials should place more emphasis on providing public transportation in Southeast Texas, or should they place less emphasis on providing public transportation, or is any change needed?*

More	61%
Less	10%
No Change	30%

Table 8: Drug Abuse

*And how big a problem would you say that drug abuse is in your neighborhood? Is it a big problem, or is it somewhat of a problem, or is it not much of a problem at all?*

Big Problem	17%
Somewhat of a Problem	23%
Not a Problem	60%

Table 9: Education

*How would you rate the educational system in Beaumont?*

Excellent	9%
Good	45%
Fair	32%
Poor	14%

Table 10: Entertainment Complex

*Thinking about the entertainment complex on I-10, was it a good idea to have built it, not such a good idea, or do you think it needs to be given more time before people can make a judgment about it?*

Good Idea	18%
Not a Good Idea	39%
Needs More Time	43%

Interviewers: Allen Anderson, Nick Haby, Jamie Kennedy, Nakisha Myles, Ahmer Naeem, Nina Raab, Rekina Smith (MPA students); Scott Anderson, Stacy Carter, Arlette Deal, Leslie Dubose, Kenneth Dukes, Jehan Ford, Patrick Gurski, Joey Kelley, Elena Korbout, Paula Mason, Mekko Minix, Shannon Tait, Richard Williams, Katherine Yosko, Jessica Makdsi (undergraduate students).