

**Delawareans' Attitudes toward Economic Growth:
Survey Results**

prepared for

**Choices for Delaware:
Life and the Economy in 2000 and Beyond**

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Delaware Public Policy Institute**

by

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INTRODUCTION

In any investigation of choices for Delaware's future, it is imperative that some understanding of the views of current residents of the state be obtained. To that end, a public opinion survey was undertaken by the Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research. More than eleven hundred households participated. While these results are a statistically reliable measure of the views of the current residents, it should be remembered that in another ten years more than 20% of today's Delawareans will not live here, and, in fact, 20% of those interviewed did not live here in 1990.

The survey was conducted by telephone using random digit dialing. This allows contact with those that have unlisted phone numbers. The survey does not capture the opinions of that small minority of Delawareans that do not have telephones. A total of 363 people age 18 and over were interviewed in Kent County, with 350 in New Castle County, and 402 in Sussex County. Weights were applied to the data to adjust for the number of adults in the household, the number of residential phone numbers in the residence, and the true age-sex distribution of the county. Statewide results are weighted to allow each county to have its true proportion in the total population.

The survey instrument was designed to capture information that reflects public opinion on diverse issues such as economic growth, public policy priorities, factors that affect an individual's quality of life, and reactions to a variety of potential public policy actions. In some cases, the same information was gathered in 1995 and 1997 and is reported where it is available. In general, the results reported are accurate within +/- 5%.

The report is divided into five substantive sections following this introduction. In the first section, questions that address overall satisfaction with the economy and life here in Delaware are discussed. This is followed by a section that deals with the top ten issues mentioned by the respondents. In addition, responses to specific questions on the schools, crime, and the environment are reported. A short section on factors that affect the quality of life is followed by one that offers a series of policy options for dealing with growth. Finally, the evaluation of a list of priorities for Delaware is reported.

Overall Satisfaction

More than 72% of respondents felt that the economy of Delaware was growing (Figure 1.1). That feeling was essentially the same across all three counties, although Sussex County respondents were slightly less positive.

About 61% of adults reported that job opportunities were also expanding, and once again that finding applies equally well in all three counties with New Castle County respondents reporting most positively (Figure 1.2). Less than 10% in all three counties thought that job opportunities were declining.

Respondents were asked if they thought Delaware was going in the right direction, and 80% responded affirmatively (Figure 1.3). There was no statistically significant difference between the counties on this issue.

More than 53% of adult Delawareans reported that the state is better off than it was five years ago, and less than 10% have a decidedly negative view of what has occurred in the recent past (Figure 1.4). There were differences between the counties. New Castle County respondents were less positive; more than 10% felt that Delaware was worse off. Kent County respondents were, on average, the most positive.

When respondents were asked if their personal circumstances were better than five years ago, the response was similar (Figure 1.5), if not even more positive (59% compared with 53% above). Kent County respondents continued to be the most positive. In New Castle County respondents answered more favorably than they did for the prior question dealing with the state. Sussex County respondents were the least positive, although still in excess of 50% thought they personally were better off.

Those interviewed were also asked to speculate about the likely quality of life in Delaware five years hence (Figure 1.6). The results were quite positive in that about half of the respondents thought that the quality of life would be even better. Still, the negative result was significantly higher than for other questions in this series. Most of that difference is attributable to New Castle County, where the negative response reached almost 20% and was statistically significantly

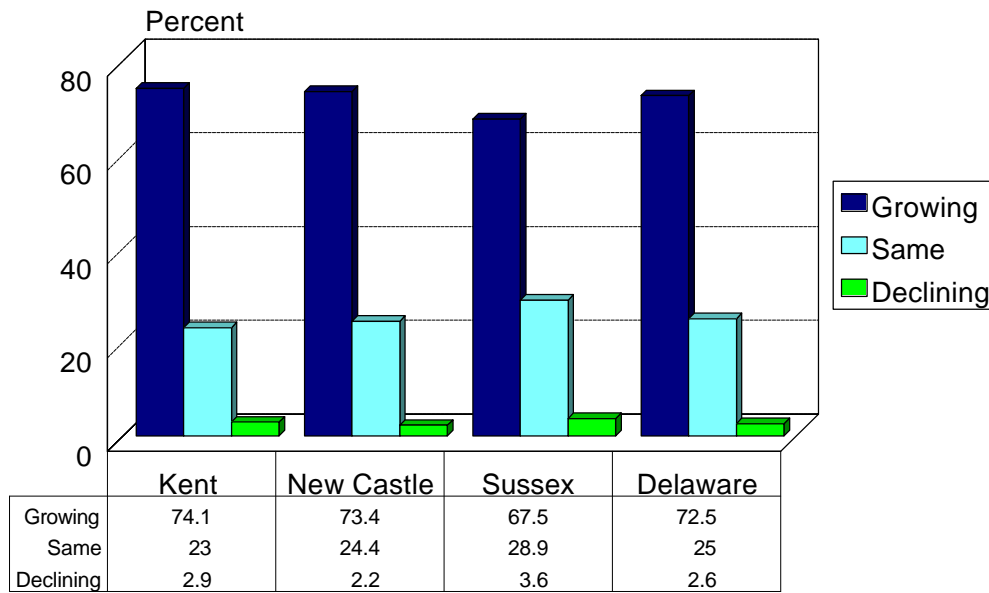
higher than that observed in Kent and Sussex counties. The often heated debate about development, traffic congestion, and some recent environmental events probably account for that view.

These results are, in general, quite positive and upbeat. As such, they compare very well with the findings of recent national polls that have asked similar questions. This undoubtedly reflects the now eight year old economic expansion that has only recently begun to slow.

Looking at this question in more detail, the most optimism was exhibited by those under 40 and the most pessimism by those from 40-64. Women were significantly more optimistic than men on this question. African Americans and Asians were considerably more optimistic about their prospects in five years than were Caucasians. There were no significant differences by income class; however, those with incomes in the \$100,000-\$150,000 group seemed less sanguine about the future.

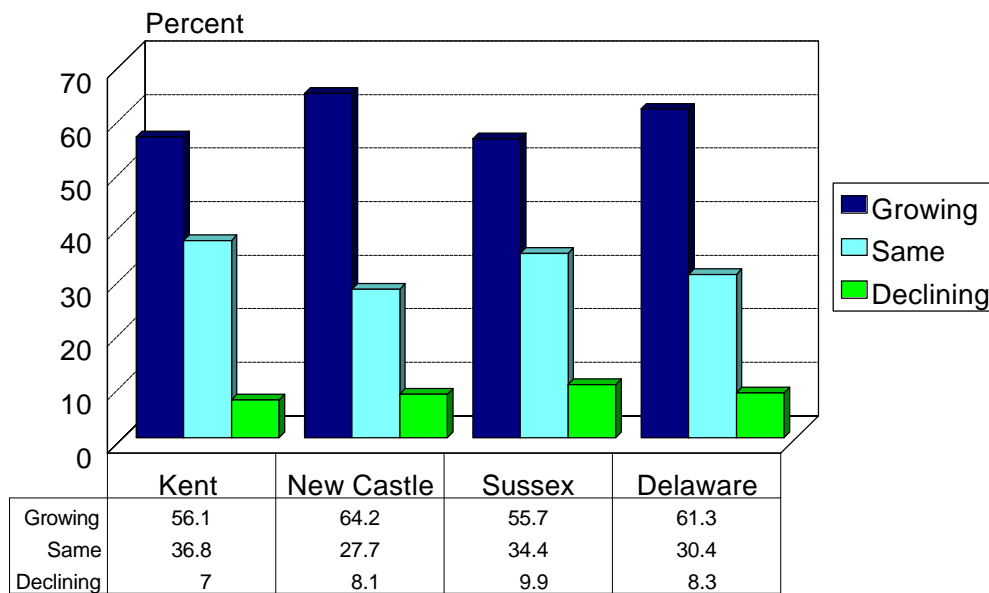
Finally, those who have moved to the state since 1990 were significantly more optimistic about the future of Delaware than those who lived here at that time. This is an important point since more than half of Delaware's population growth stems from people who move here. They bring with them the perspective of their previous residences. For a person moving to Delaware from northern New Jersey, for example, the idea that Delaware has traffic congestion is greeted with some skepticism and even amusement.

Figure 1.1
How Is Delaware's Economy Changing
by County



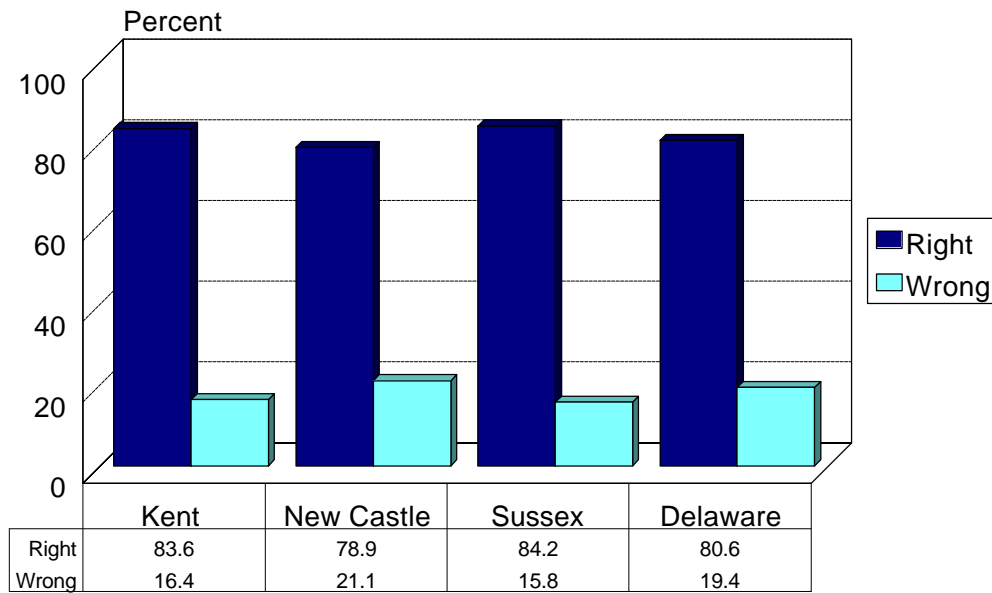
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 1.2
How Are Job Opportunities Changing
by County



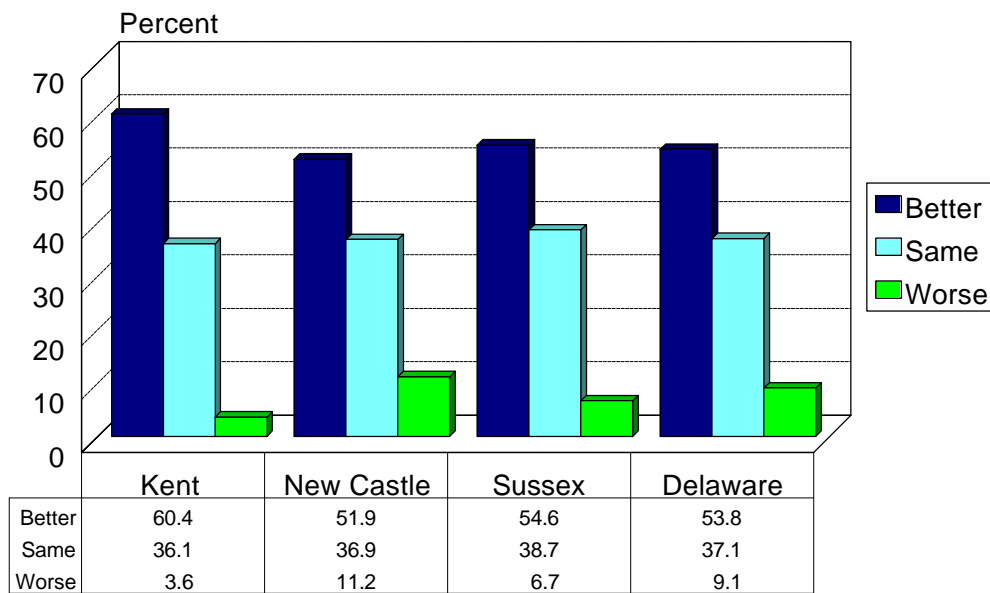
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 1.3
Do You Feel Delaware Is on the Right or Wrong Track
by County



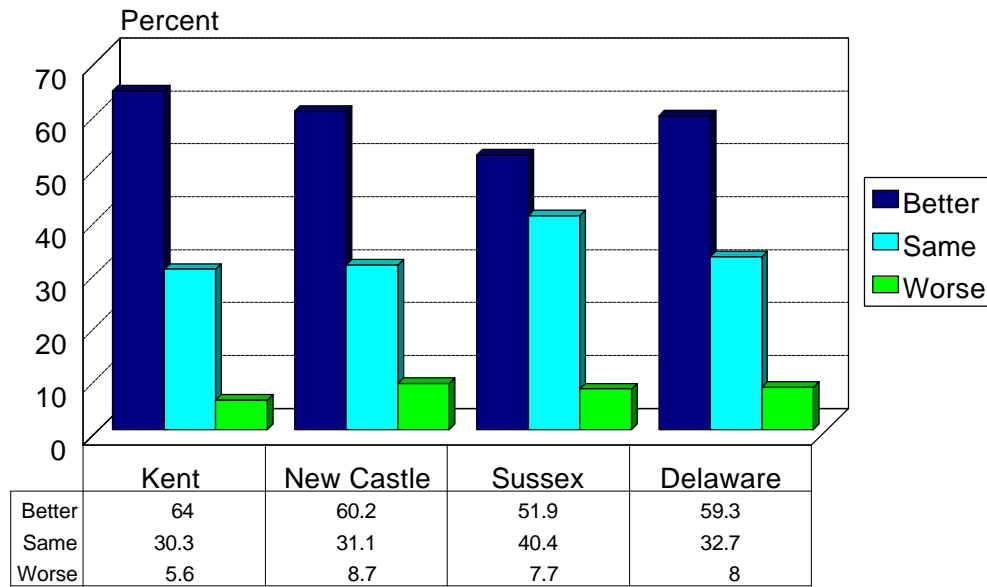
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 1.4
Is Delaware Better Off than Five Years Ago
by County



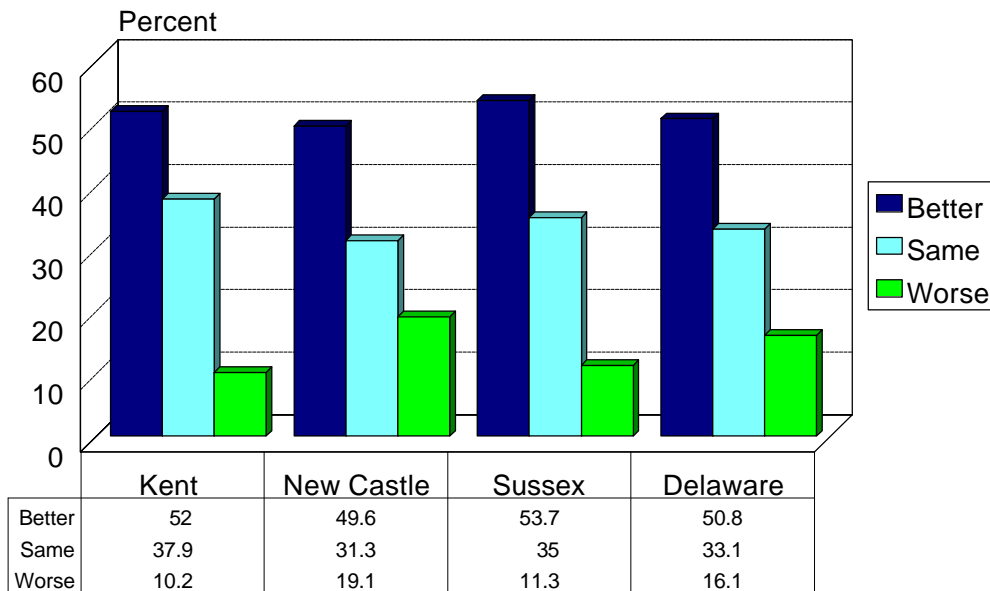
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 1.5
Are You Better Off than Five Years Ago
by County



Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 1.6
Quality of Life in Delaware Five Years from Now
by County



Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Top Ten Issues

Respondents were asked to grade the importance of a list of issues from 1 (not important) to 7 (very important). The ranking below is based on the percent responding *very important* (Figure 2.1). It does not mean necessarily that these areas are seen as problems. In prior years, when respondents were asked how serious a problem each area represented, a very different profile resulted.

This profile, with the exception of the school issues, is very much in tune with the quality of life issues addressed earlier. All of the items selected relate very much to personal safety and well being. Noticeably absent are all of the issues like *economic growth, job creation, and unemployment*. Also missing are issues like *loss of farmland, open spaces, and population growth*. Water pollution is an interesting case. Several incidents in New Castle County in the past year have evidently heightened people's interest. However, the discussion about pollution in the Inland Bays did not seem to have had an appreciable affect in Sussex County. This suggests people were concerned primarily by the safety of the supply of drinking water.

New Castle County respondents generally responded with greater intensity: on six out of the ten issues more chose the highest rating. In contrast, Sussex County respondents were much less likely to assign the highest weight to an issue. Consistent with concerns about the availability of primary care physicians in both Kent and Sussex counties, respondents from southern Delaware were more intense on the health care issues. Of those issues that did not make the top ten list, *Unemployment* and *Job Creation* stand out in Kent County with more than 60% classifying both as a very important issue. Currently, the Kent County economy is lagging the rest of the state.

The fact that economic issues were not rated highly probably reflects the fact that people assume the current income and employment growth condition will continue. In other words, these issues for now are not ones of major concern. These issues will be addressed in a slightly different way in the last section of the report.

Public schools are a concern. To that end, four questions were put to the survey respondents. They were asked who should bear the responsibility for student academic performance: parents, teachers, or administrators. Those responses are found in Figures 2.2 through 2.4, respectively.

In general, respondents said the largest part of the responsibility should be borne by the parents. Statewide, more than 60% of respondents think parents should bear all or most of the responsibility, while 45% would place that level of responsibility on teachers, and less than 30% on administrators. The pattern of responses for Kent and New Castle counties were quite similar. However, Sussex County respondents were much less intense in assigning responsibility. They were more likely to say everyone should have some, but not most or all of that responsibility. The responses for the state are summarized in Figure 2.5.

The respondents were not very positive with the current condition of the schools, at least with reference to five years ago. Approximately 45% of the respondents statewide felt that the schools had gotten worse (Figure 2.6). There were differences between the counties, with Sussex County respondents being relatively more positive and New Castle County respondents relatively more negative.

Many of the respondents would not have school age children and thus may not have had accurate information about the schools. To test that hypothesis, the sample was split into two groups: those with household members under the age of 18 and those without. (No information was available as to whether they were attending school, public or private.) The results are reported in Figure 2.7 below.

There is no difference between the two samples with respect to the proportion that think the schools have gotten worse (45%). There is a significantly higher proportion among those with children who think the schools are improving. Whether these results are real or just perceptions, these high negative responses are a problem.

Crime is one of the top ten issues, and it is also one that state and local government bear most of the responsibility for controlling. Three questions addressed this issue directly. The first question asked about the safety of the respondent's neighborhood (Figure 2.8). More than 90% in all three counties felt they were either fairly or very safe. Differences between the counties were insignificant.

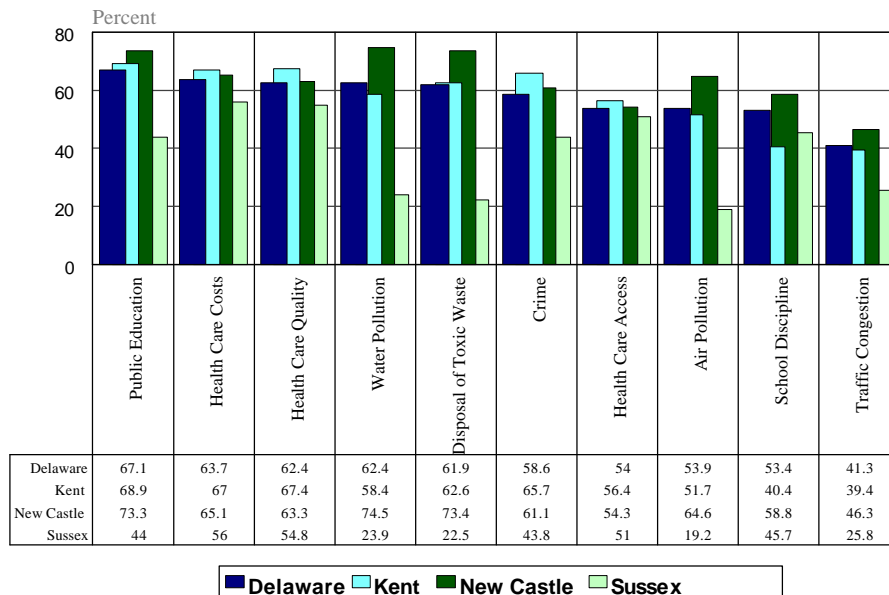
More (12.1%) thought their neighborhoods were less safe than a year ago in contrast to those that thought the neighborhood had gotten better (6.9%) (Figure 2.9). The pattern across the counties was similar and no significant differences were observed.

Respondents were also asked if they had ever been a crime victim in Delaware. Nearly 30% responded affirmatively (Figure 2.10). Those from New Castle County (33%) were significantly more likely to have been a victim. This is hardly surprising since population density is one of the best predictors of crime in the United States. The fact that Sussex County respondents were the second most likely seems surprising. However, population densities in Sussex County rise dramatically during the summer and on weekends year round.

The final questions in this section deal with the environment. Respondents were asked how healthy was Delaware's environment. About 60% responded in the more affirmative ways (Figure 2.11). Responses from New Castle County were significantly worse, with more than 17% responding that the environment was not healthy. On the other hand, Sussex County respondents were more positive, with more than 15% describing the environment as very healthy.

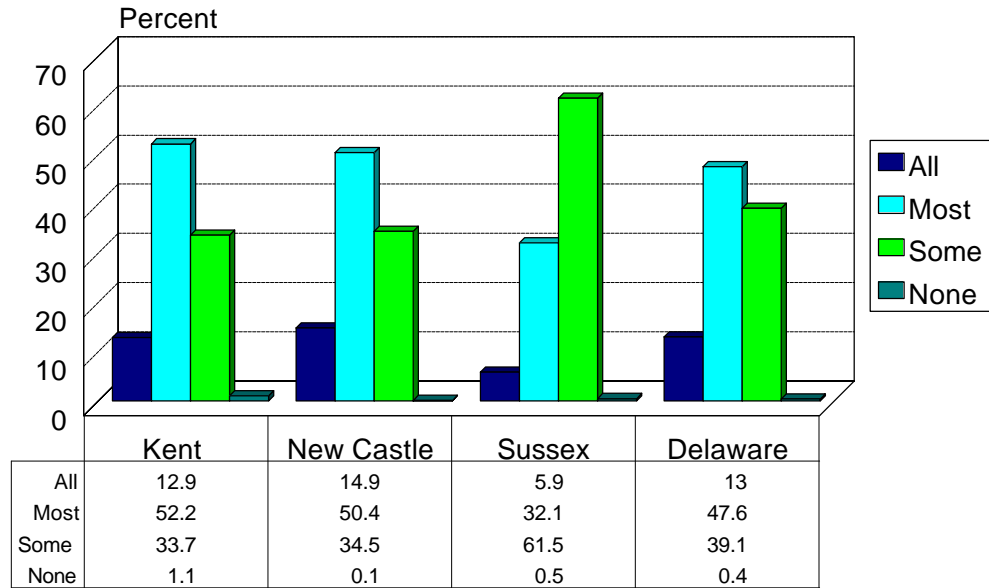
More than twice as many (29.6%) think that Delaware's environment has gotten worse over the past five years than think that it has gotten better (14.6%). Once again Sussex County is somewhat more positive. However, almost three times more respondents in Kent County think the environment has gotten worse than think it has gotten better (Figure 2.12).

Figure 2.1
Top Ten Issues in 1998
by County



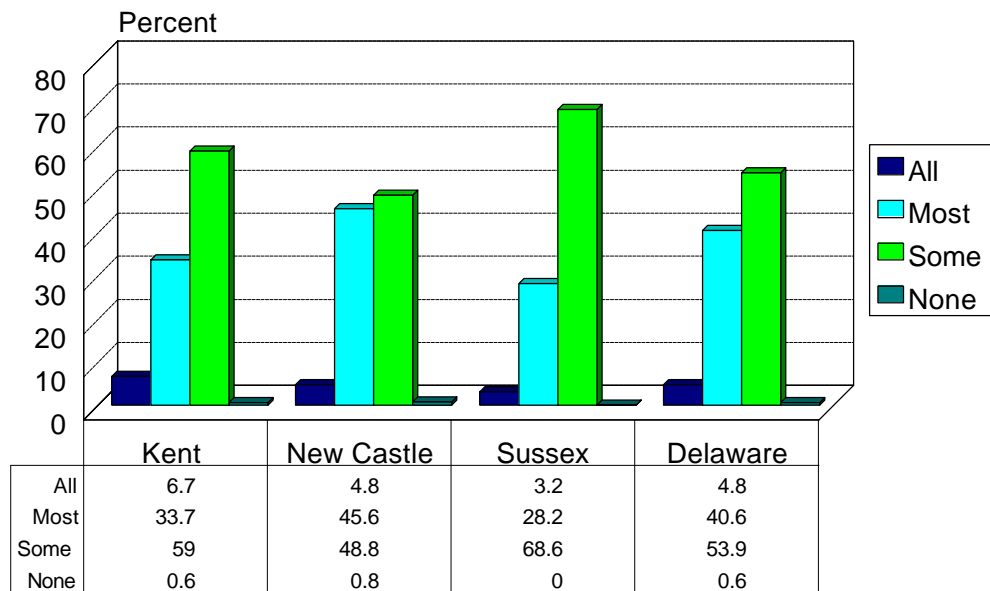
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 2.2
Parent's Responsibility for Academic Performance
by County



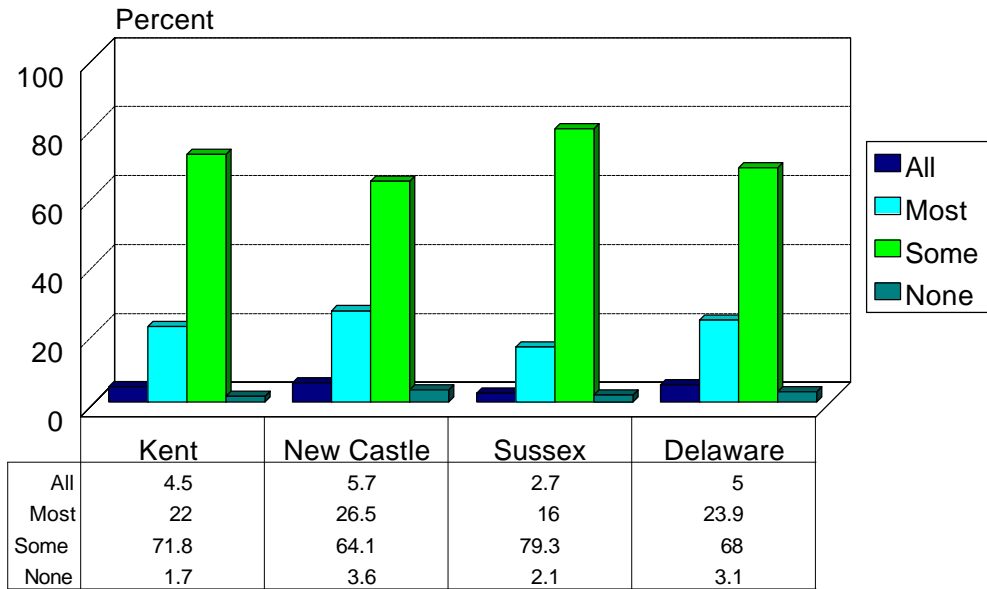
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 2.3
Teacher's Responsibility for Academic Performance
by County



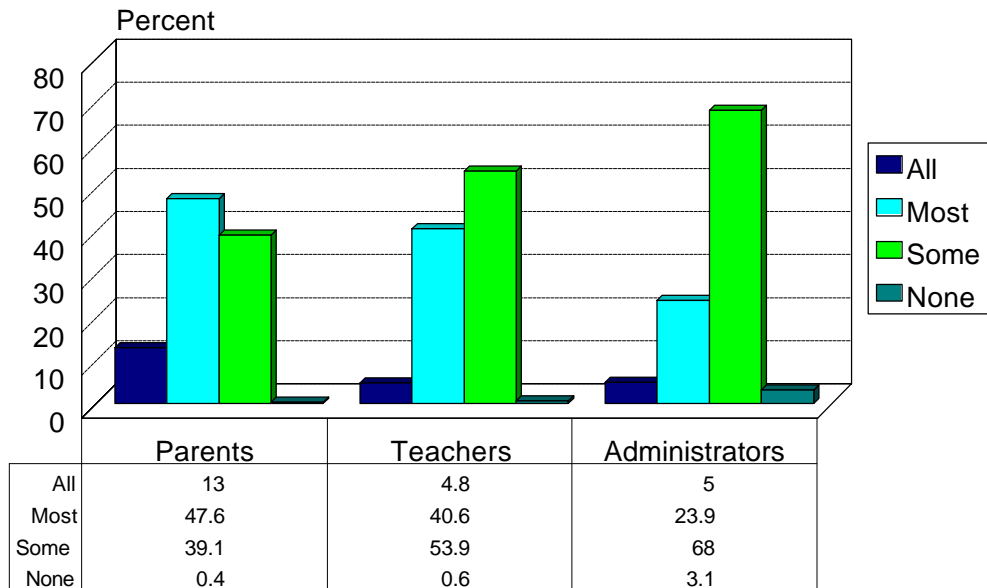
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 2.4
Administrator's Responsibility for Academic Performance
by County



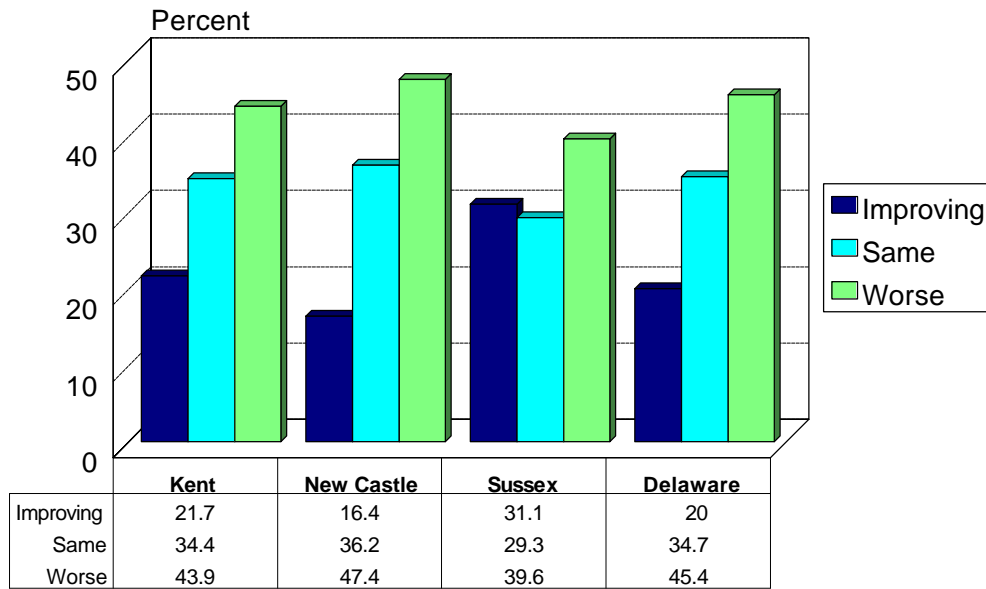
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 2.5
Responsibility for Academic Performance in Delaware
by Position



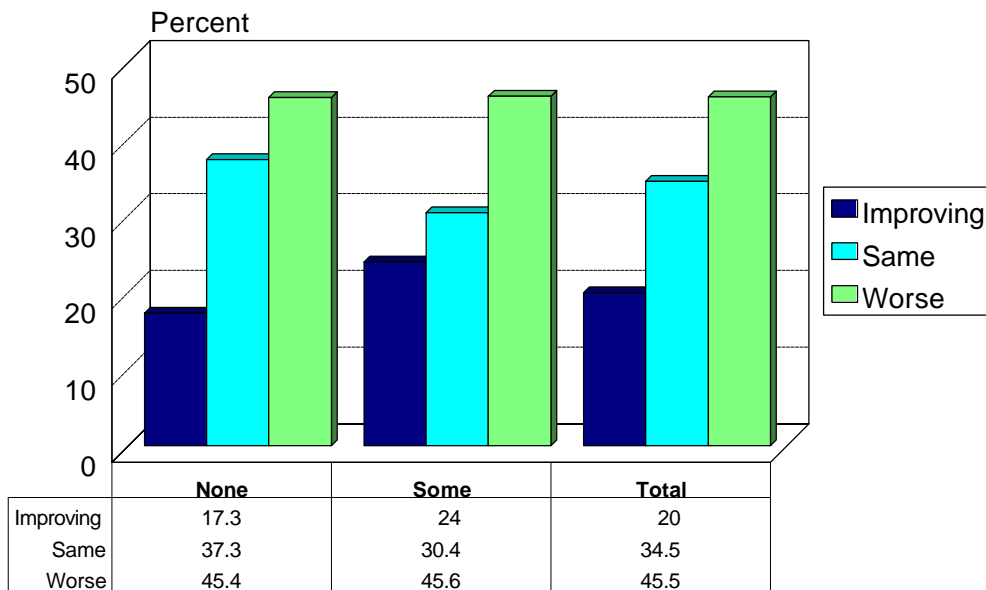
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 2.6
Compared to Five Years Ago, How Are the Schools Doing
by County



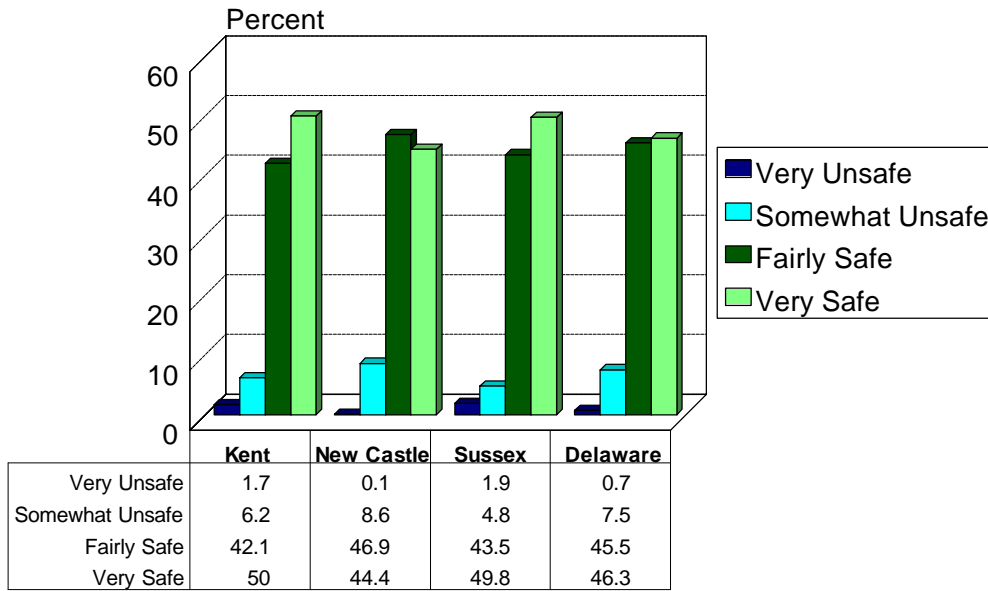
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 2.7
Compared to Five Years Ago, How Are the Schools Doing
by Children in Household



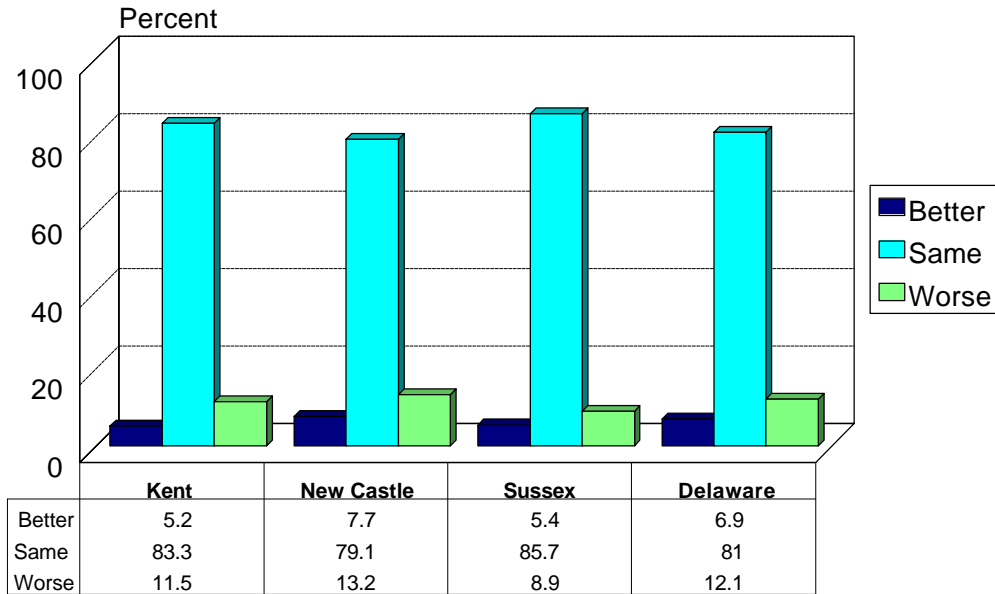
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 2.8
How Safe Is Your Neighborhood
by County



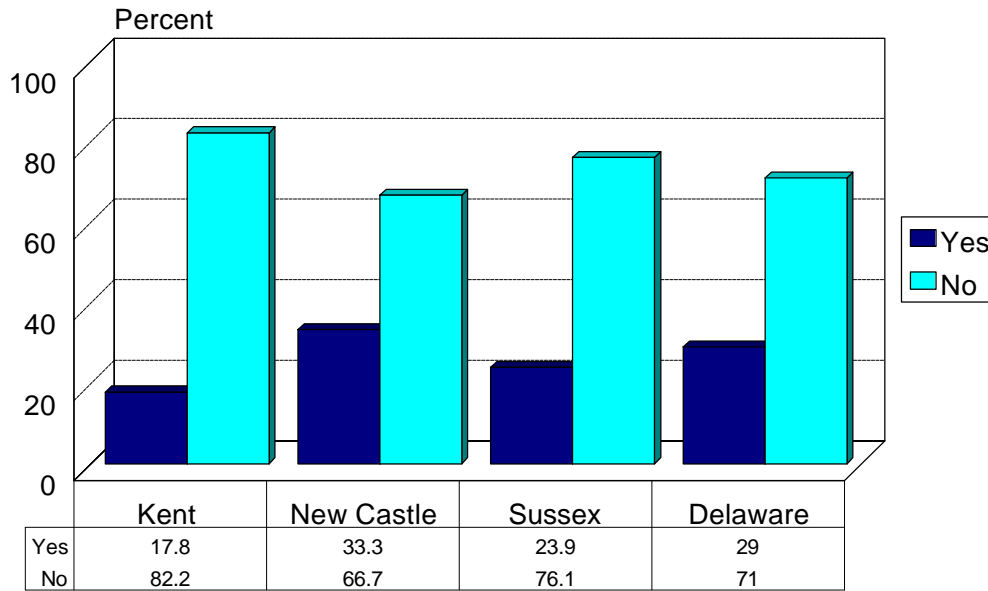
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 2.9
How Safe Is Your Neighborhood Compared to One Year Ago
by County



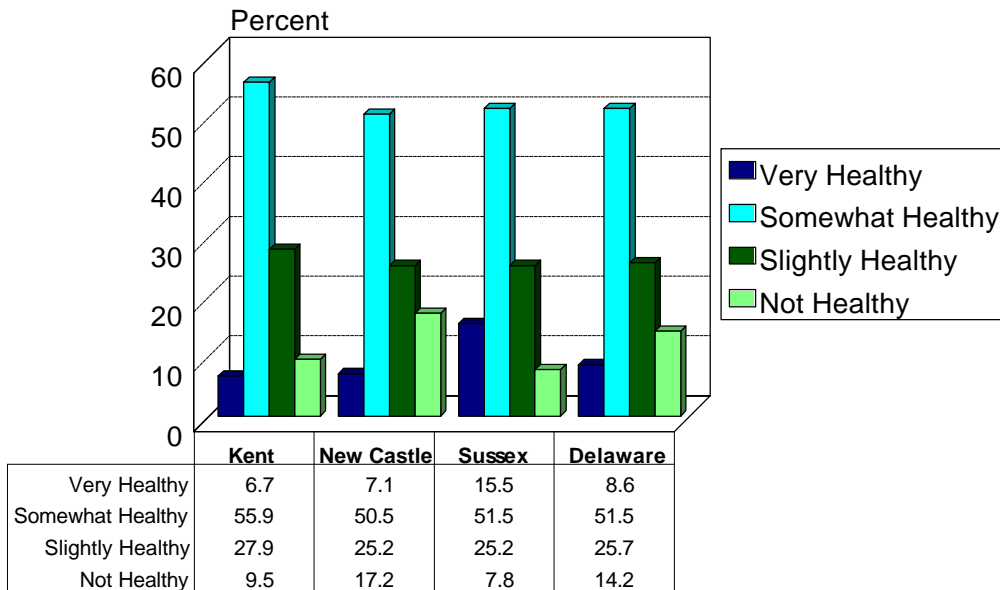
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 2.10
Have You Ever Been a Crime Victim in Delaware
by County



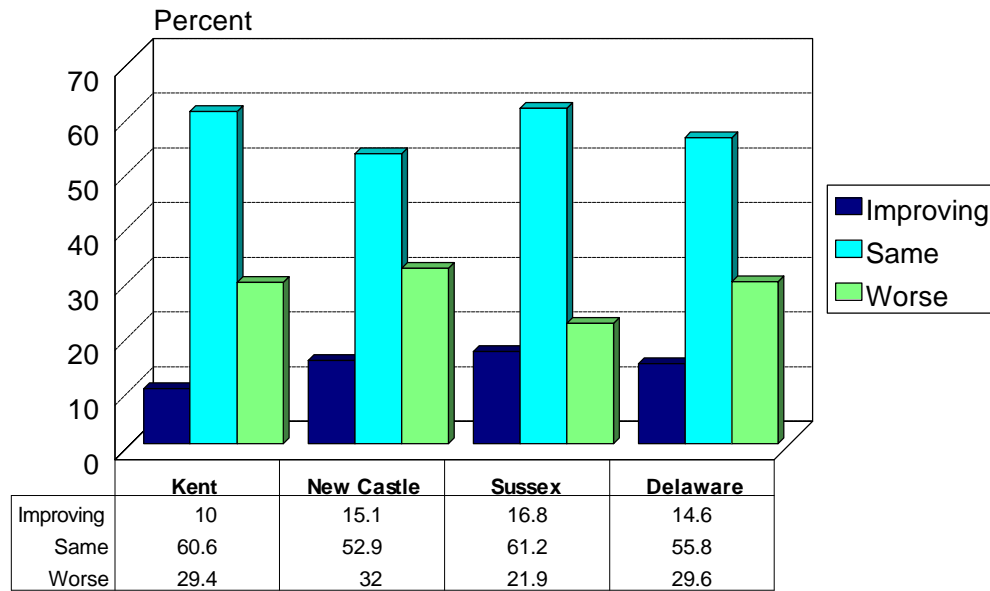
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 2.11
How Healthy Is Delaware's Environment
by County



Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 2.12
How Is the Environment Compared to Five Years Ago
by County



Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Quality of Life

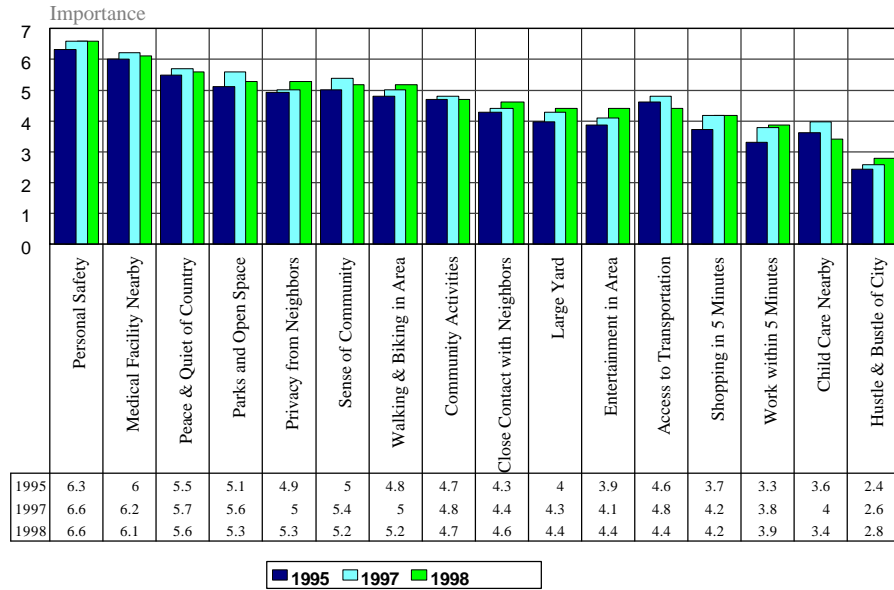
Respondents were asked to evaluate a list of factors that might affect their quality of life. The same formulation of the questions was used in 1995 and 1997 as well. The scale varied from 1 (not important at all) to 7 (very important). The results for all three years are shown in Figure 3.1 below.

In general, the ranking of the items has remained fairly stable over all three periods. *Personal Safety* remains atop the list and has increased in intensity over time. The desire to have a *Medical Facility Nearby* is not unexpected and probably is related to the same underlying theme of security as the previous factor. In a related question, about 92% of Delawareans felt that their neighborhoods were either fairly or very safe. However, 12% sensed that their neighborhoods had become less safe in the past year. This also is consistent with the stable 4th place priority given to *Improving Police Protection* (Figure 5.1).

The next three items -- *Peace and Quiet of the Country, Parks and Open Space*, and *Privacy from Neighbors* -- address a common theme, which is personal space. All have increased in importance since 1995, although marginally. The importance of maintaining control over one's time and space is probably derivative of the relatively complex and time-pressured lives common in the 1990s. This idea is further supported by the fact that only 6% of Delawareans want to live in a city and 37% would most like a home in the country (Figure 3.2). Support for priorities like state acquisition of open space and farmland preservation (Figure 5.1) are consistent with these views. This also is consistent with the 3rd place priority given to *Improving the Environment* (Figure 5.1).

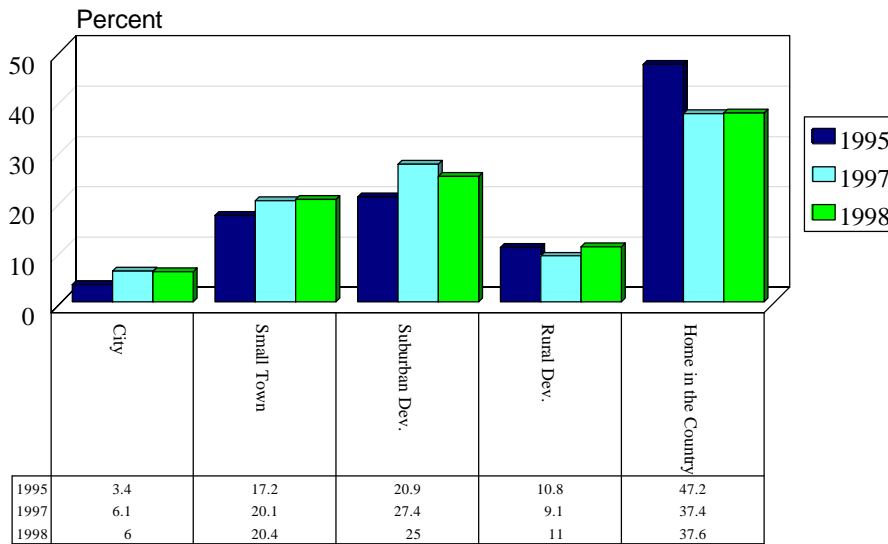
The next group -- *Sense of Community, Walking & Biking in the Area*, and *Community Activities* -- addresses the theme of social interaction. All are rated lower than the contrasting theme of personal space, although the differences are small. The remaining factors, except for *Large Yard*, are generally related to increasing population density, particularly the lowest rated item, *Hustle & Bustle of the City*.

Figure 3.1
How Is the Environment Compared to Five Years Ago
by County



Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 3.2
Where Would You Most Like to Live
by County



Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Selected Policy Options

In surveys conducted during 1995 and 1997, the latter of which was part of the Shaping Delaware initiative, a series of potential and actual policy options were addressed. Those same questions with one exception were asked again this year. The results for all three years are shown in Figure 4.1 through 4.8 below. In addition, respondents were asked to react to a number of other proposals. The results for those proposals are found in Figure 4.9 through Figure 4.13 below.

Planners offered a number of different alternatives to policy-makers to help control growth and development. There are incentives and disincentives as well as outright restrictions that can be used to accomplish the desired objectives. Since most of these actions would require a consensus among some very diverse interests, it is useful to understand what Delawareans in general think about these proposals. A series of four potential policies that could positively influence growth patterns was proposed to survey participants. These were followed by several additional questions to add contrast and context to the proposed policies. In evaluating this information the reader is asked to look at the contrasts between policies as well as to the level of support for any one item. It is not unusual to find high levels of support on a survey and then to have a more tempered response when the policy is activated.

Growth Control Policies.

The first policy proposes that the full cost of new development reflect not only land and construction costs, but also the full cost of building the roads, sewers, water supply, and schools necessary to support that development. The policy is intended to encourage development in areas where infrastructure is already in place. The manner in which the policy would be implemented was addressed.

More than 60% of respondents in the state favored this proposition in all three years (Figure 4.1). Further, the negative response was limited to less than 20% in 1995 and 1997. In 1998, the question was rephrased to say "housing" rather than "development." This caused a significant loss in support and a considerable increase in the negative responses. Apparently,

this change in the proposal made the proposal more concrete and perhaps was seen to have potential negative impacts on the respondents. It became a “pocketbook” issue.

The second proposal is designed to encourage the continuation of productive farmland in agricultural use instead of its being developed for residential purposes. This policy would permit the state to purchase such development rights directly from the owners using tax dollars. This is intended to reduce the suburban sprawl and to support the agriculture sector, an important part of Delaware's economy. At the same time it recognizes the rights of private property and the valuable asset that the land represents to the owner. This proposal was implemented several years ago.

Delawareans respond quite positively to this policy. More than 70% statewide were in agreement during all three years, and support has actually grown during its implementation (Figure 4.2). Only about 15% of the respondents were negative.

The third proposed policy suggested that the state actively purchase land with the goal of preserving open spaces, promoting green-ways, and building new or larger parks. Suburban sprawl has a tendency to consume open space, which for many is an important ingredient for a good quality of life. By actively acquiring land for these purposes, the state can play a larger part in improving and preserving quality of life even as the more difficult task of guiding growth is being undertaken.

This is clearly a popular proposal. It attracts the most support, almost 80%, of any of the policies described to participants in the survey and also has low negatives (Figure 4.3). The state has been actively acquiring open space over the past several years and these results clearly support the continuation of that effort.

The fourth policy, to give tax benefits to individuals and businesses who move into preferred growth areas, failed to garner 50% agreement from the respondents in 1995 and 1997 (Figure 4.4). In 1998 slightly more than 50% did support this idea and that difference was significantly higher than in the two previous surveys. These data suggest that Delawareans may suspect that they will have to pay higher taxes if someone else gets a break. The negative responses remain relatively high in all three years.

The fifth proposal is intended to preserve the carrying capacity of the roads, which is one of the objectives of managing growth. Survey participants were asked if they would support efforts to expand public transit, bikeways, and walkways. If reasonable alternatives were available to the private automobile, traffic congestion could be reduced as well as air pollution, and to some extent noise pollution. All of these would impact the quality of life of Delawareans.

People are supportive of this proposal (Figure 4.5). More than 70% supported this proposal in 1995 and 1997 although somewhat fewer did so in 1998. The negative responses are now over 30%.

One of the principal reasons for controlling suburban sprawl is the impact that automobiles have on the environment including land use, air pollution, traffic congestion, and quality of life. Transportation alternatives work best in areas with dense populations. In most of the state, the densities are not ideal for public transit and neither is the current mode of development. Today, more than 75% of people drive to work alone. This figure has increased significantly over the last twenty years in spite of all of the emphasis on alternatives. This is partly because both people and jobs have been spreading out geographically and also because participation in the labor force has increased dramatically in the last twenty years. In Figure 4.5, evidence was presented that Delawareans support more funds for alternative forms of transportation. But does this mean that they want to spend less on highways?

The majority of Delawareans want to expand and improve the state's highway system (Figure 4.6). Clearly, improvements in the highway and road network are seen as the solution as opposed to other transportation alternatives. In 1998 however, there was a significant drop in the desire for spending more money on highways. When that is coupled with a drop in support for public transit; however, both are probably related to the desire to avoid any tax increases.

Furthermore, when respondents were asked if funds should be taken from highways and given to transit, only a third agreed in 1995 and even that level has fallen to 24% in 1998 (Figure 4.7). The negative responses have risen to almost 68% in 1998 and that represents an increase of 20% in the last three years.

The results for all of these proposals are summarized in Figure 4.8 below. Clearly, the programs for the preservation of agricultural lands and the acquisition of open space continue to have strong and stable support. Of the others, only offering tax breaks to locate in preferred growth areas shows any significant positive trend. Trading off transit for highways exhibits the only significant negative trend during the three years.

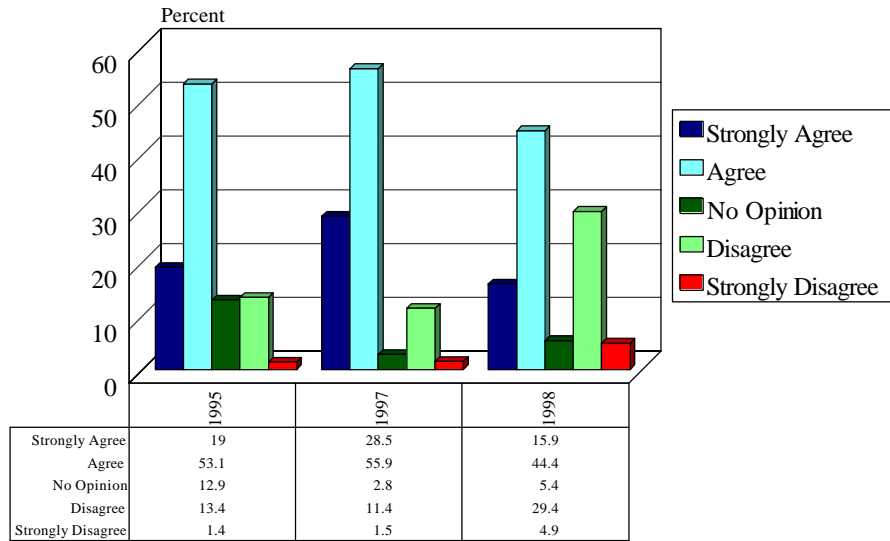
Finally, the majority of Delawareans continue to support the rights of county and municipal governments to make land use and zoning decisions (Figure 4.9). Support for this position has grown over the three years. Most of the gain has come from a reduction in those not offering an opinion, which has fallen from 22% to 7% over the three years. The negative responses remain in the vicinity of 20%. It is interesting that few express strong opinions either negatively or positively.

In 1998, respondents were asked to offer an opinion on two business-related issues. The first issue addressed further use of the coastal zone by businesses with the caveat that there would be no environmental damage. Statewide, the respondents were evenly split on this issue. However, the results for the counties were quite different. Both Kent and New Castle county respondents were quite negative with less than 40% agreeing. In Sussex County, more than 60% thought the idea was a good one.

While more than 54% of the respondents statewide felt that government over-regulated business, there were significant differences between the counties (Figure 4.11). Once again respondents from Sussex were most positive with 74% agreeing. On the other hand, New Castle County respondents agreed less than 50% of the time. It would appear that this opinion is inversely related to the overall level of business activity.

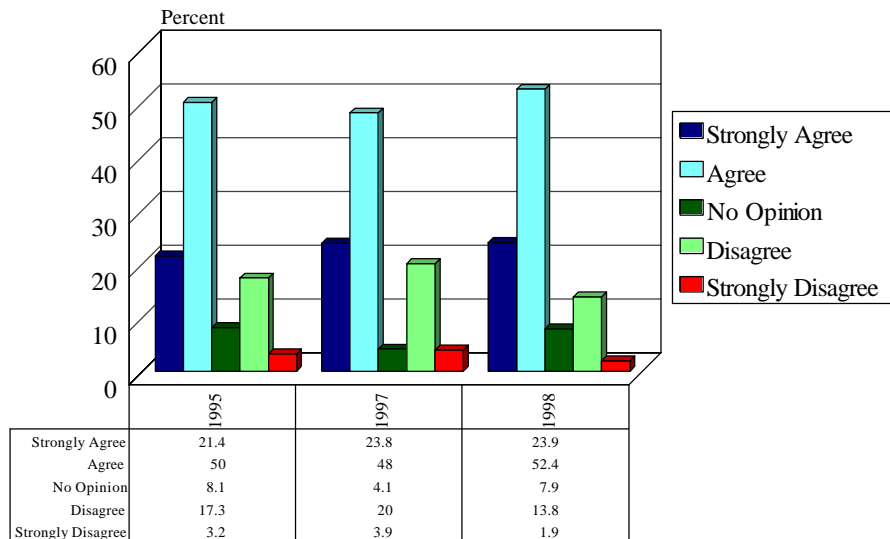
Finally, two questions were asked requiring the respondents to choose between alternatives to congestion. In Figure 4.12 the choice is between higher quality jobs and congestion. Everyone was willing to take more congestion if the result was better jobs. In Figure 4.13, results are shown for the choice between higher gas taxes and congestion. Higher taxes were chosen as the better alternative.

Figure 4.1
Price of New Housing Should Include the Full Cost of Infrastructure:
1995-1998



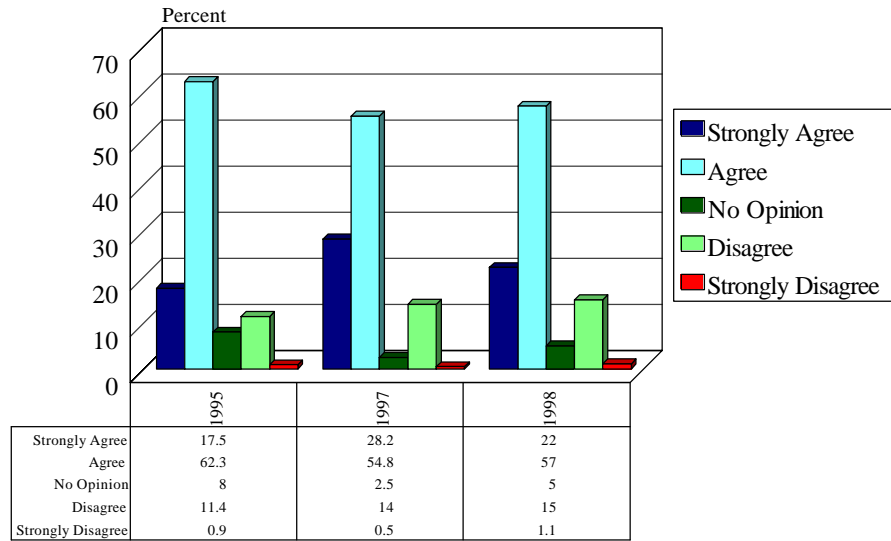
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 4.2
Pay Owners of Farmland to Keep in Agricultural Use:
1995-1998



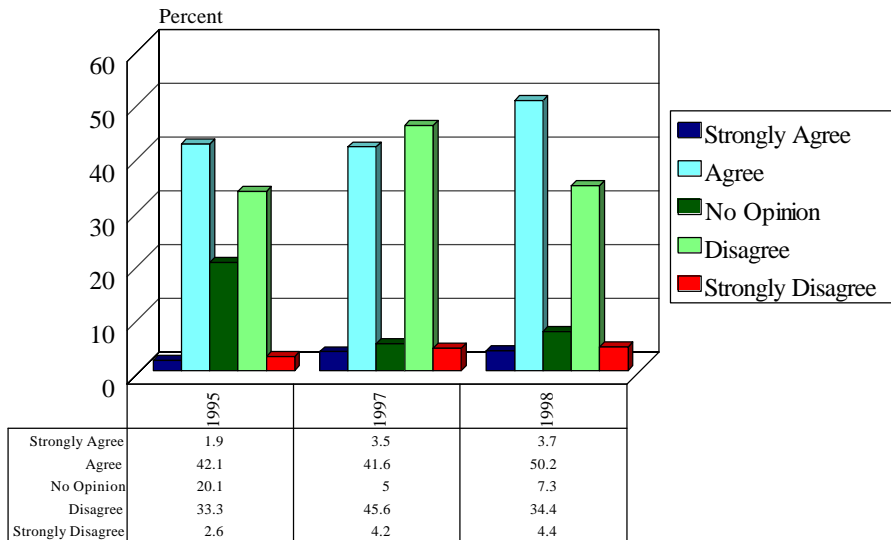
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 4.3
State Should Actively Buy Open Space, Parks, and Green-ways:
1995-1998



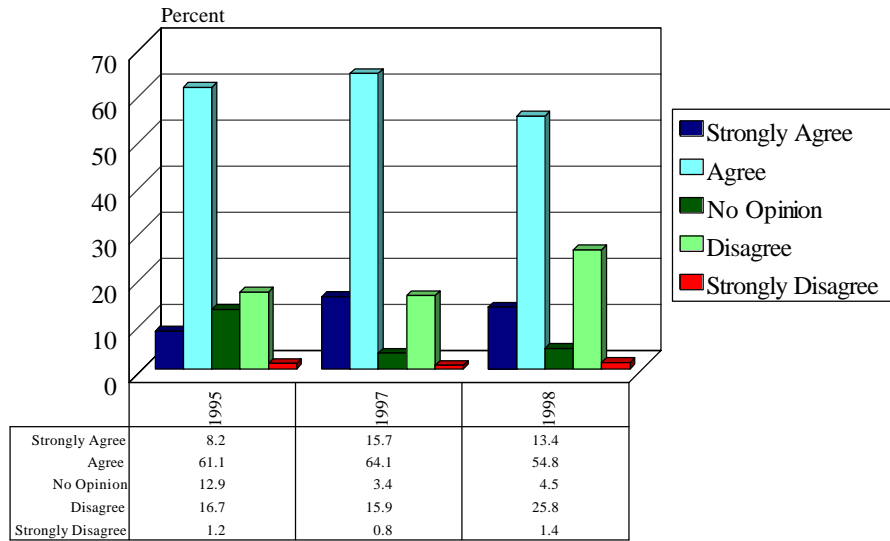
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 4.4
Tax Breaks for Those Who Move into Preferred Growth Areas:
1995-1998



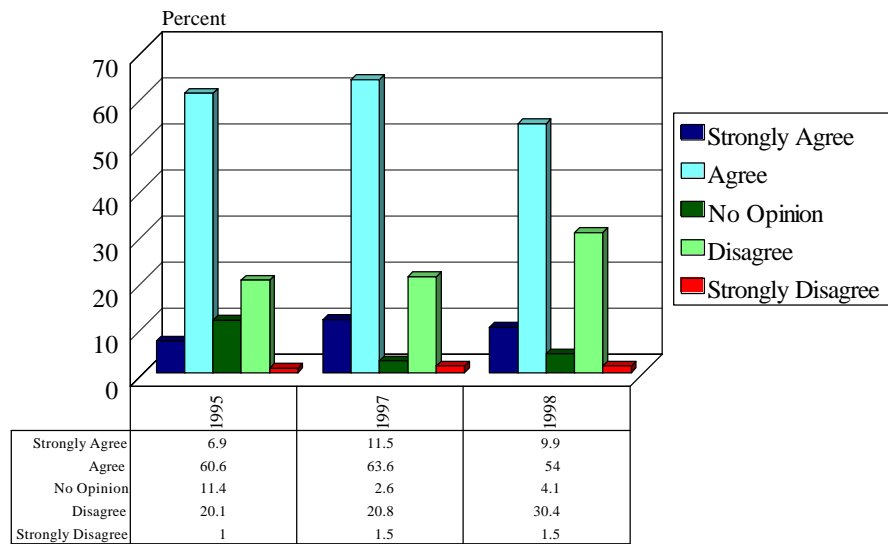
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 4.5
More Money for Public Transit, Bikeways, and Walkways:
1995-1998



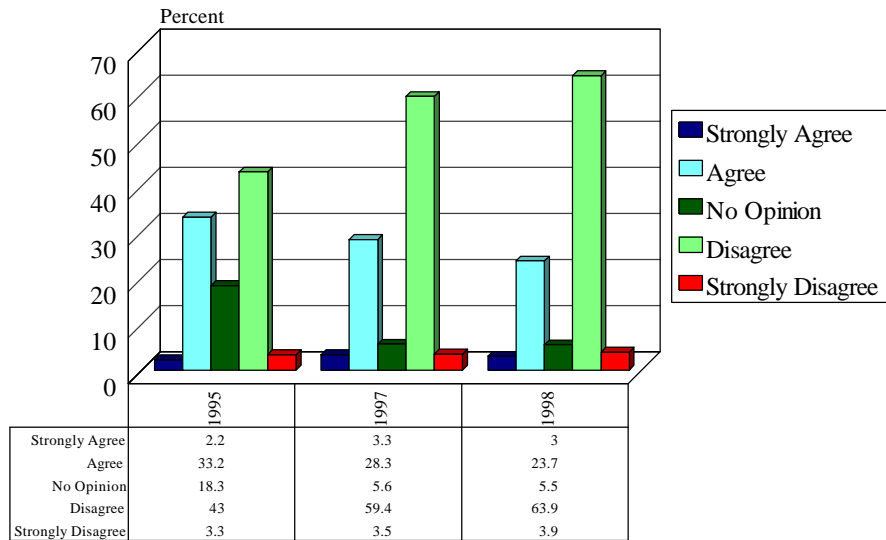
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 4.6
More Money for Highways:
1995-1998



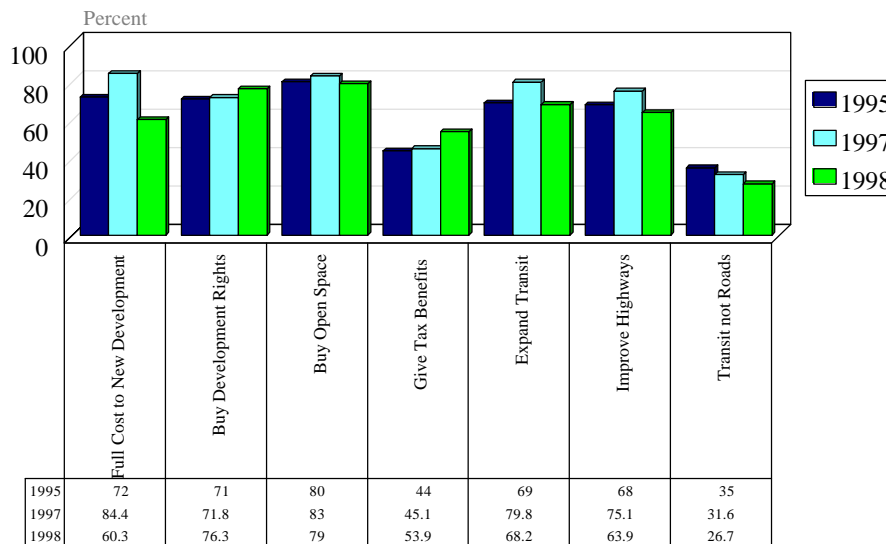
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 4.7
More Money for Transit - Less for Highways:
1995-1998



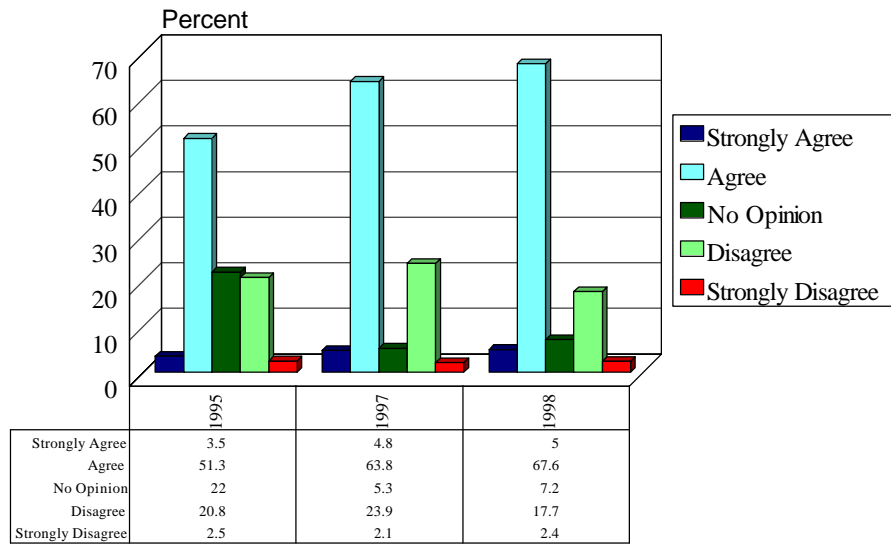
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 4.8
What Action Should Be Taken (Percent Agreeing):
1995-1998



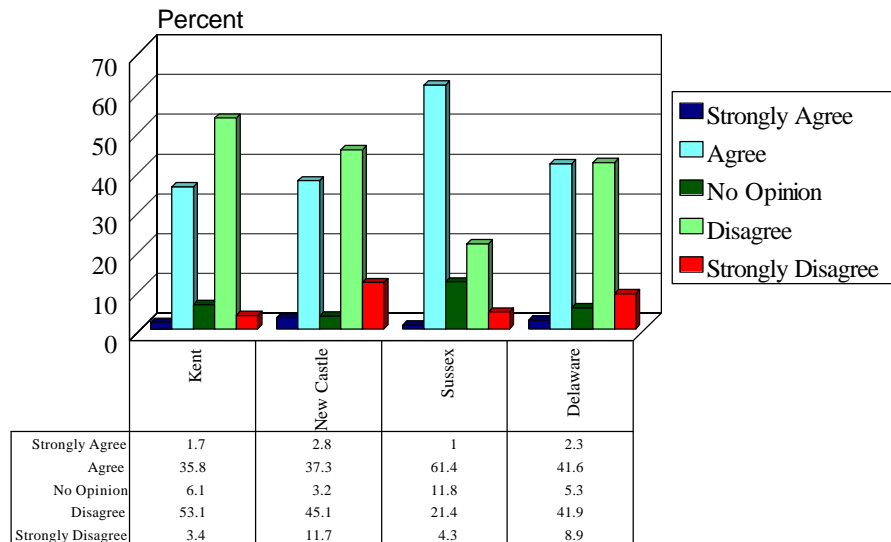
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 4.9
Counties and Cities Should Make Land Use/Zoning Decisions:
1995-1998



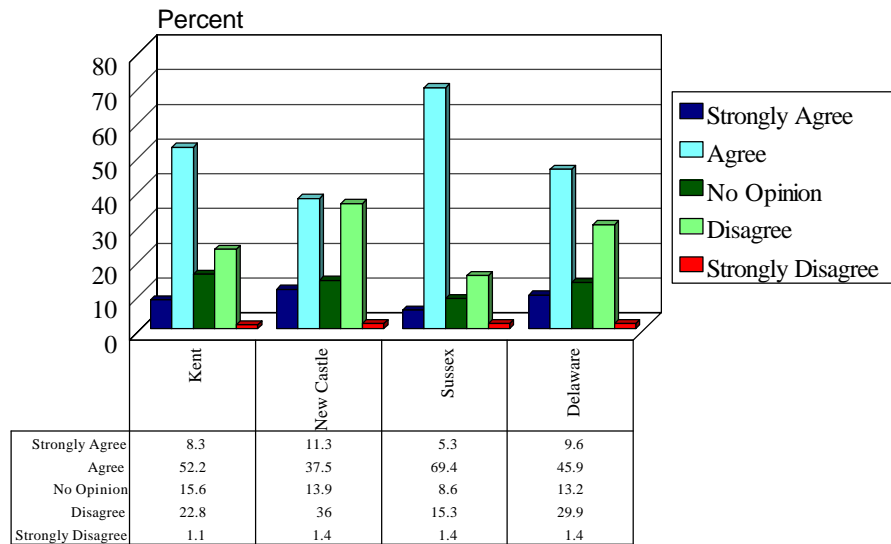
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 4.10
OK for Business to Expand into the Coastal Zone If No Pollution:
by County



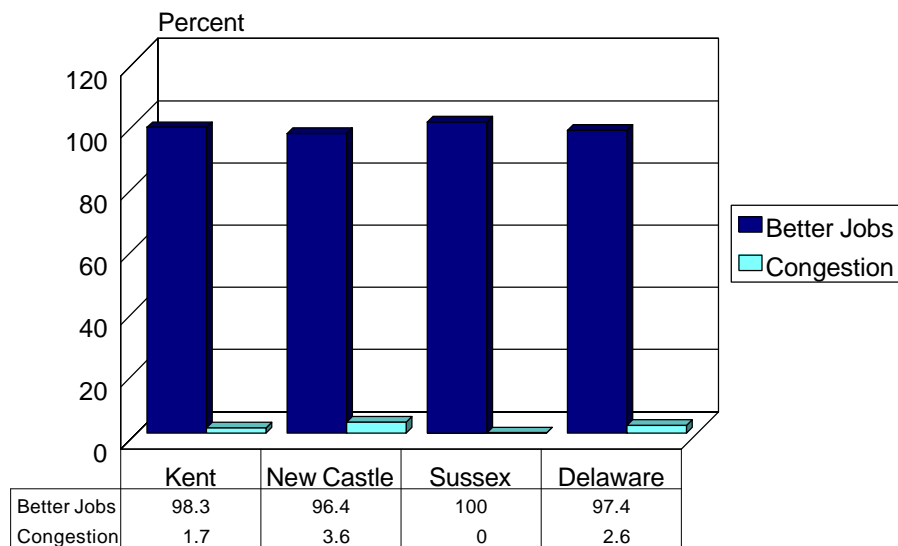
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 4.11
Too Much Government Regulation of Business:
by County



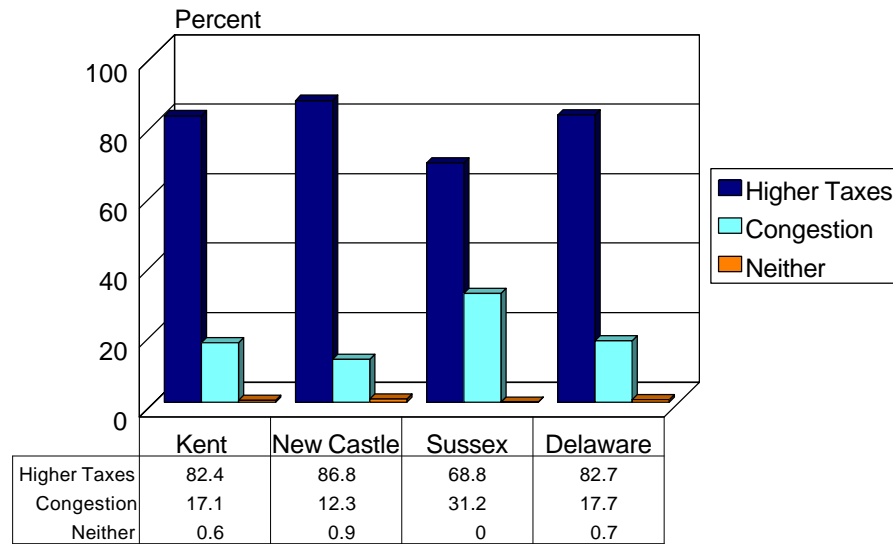
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 4.12
Choose Higher Quality Jobs or More Congestion:
by County



Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 4.13
Choose Higher Gas Tax or More Congestion:
by County



Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

State Priorities

Respondents were given a list of potential public policy actions that could be pursued. They were asked to prioritize each item by rating it on a scale from 1 (not a priority) to 7 (high priority). Since the same questions were asked in 1995 and 1997, the results for all three years are shown in Figure 5.1 below.

The perennial one-two punch of *Improving Public Education* and *Developing and Keeping Jobs* are also linked. In order for the economy of the state to keep growing, there needs to be a continuous supply of new and well-trained (or at least trainable) workers. Many of the new workers will be recent graduates of the Delaware public schools. It is crucial that these graduates have the tools to fill these new positions. Further, employers must be convinced that Delaware's labor pool is large enough and sufficiently well trained to support their growth plans. According to the survey respondents, there is work to be done. More than 45% of those responding thought public schools were worse today than five years ago (Figure 2.6). This is one reason this issue is ranked number one on the priority list.

Improving the environment is ranked third among the listed policy actions. This result is also consistent with the first two. Many employers have concluded that the quality of life available to their employees is important, if the company is going to grow. However, this does not mean that this priority should take precedence over all others, but rather should be managed in concert with these other areas. Currently, about 40% of Delawareans are less than enthusiastic about the health of the state's environment (Figure 2.11). On a related topic, the participants were asked if industry should be allowed to expand into the Coastal Zone, if there was no environmental impact. Delawareans were split almost equally between agreeing and disagreeing with the proposition (Figure 4.10). However, more than 56% thought that business was over-regulated by the government (Figure 4.11).

There were also interesting differences between the counties. For example, respondents from Sussex County were far less concerned with *Preserving Farmland*, *Improving Tourism*, *Improving the Environment*, *Controlling Growth*, and *Buying Open Space/Parkland* than participants in New Castle or Kent counties.

In general, the respondents thought that Delaware was on the right track. That was shown earlier (Figure 1.3). One way of looking at the discordant group – those that thought Delaware was on the *wrong track* – is to compare their priorities with those holding the opposite opinion. This comparison is shown in Figure 5.2 below. The priorities marked with “***” signify that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups, *right track* and *wrong track*. There seem to be two themes represented in the differences. The first relates to wanting less government and taxes, while the second is concerned with controlling growth and open space. These are two distinct groups within the *wrong track* minority.

Since Delaware now generates the majority of its population growth from net migration, it is important to understand if those arriving in Delaware recently hold different opinions about the state's priorities. In Figure 5.3, the priorities of those that responded *yes* when asked if they were a resident of Delaware in 1990 are compared with those that moved here after 1990. Once again, the differences are marked with “***”. Recent arrivals are less concerned about *controlling growth, loss of farmland, and preserving open spaces*. At the same time, they do see *improving tourism* more positively.

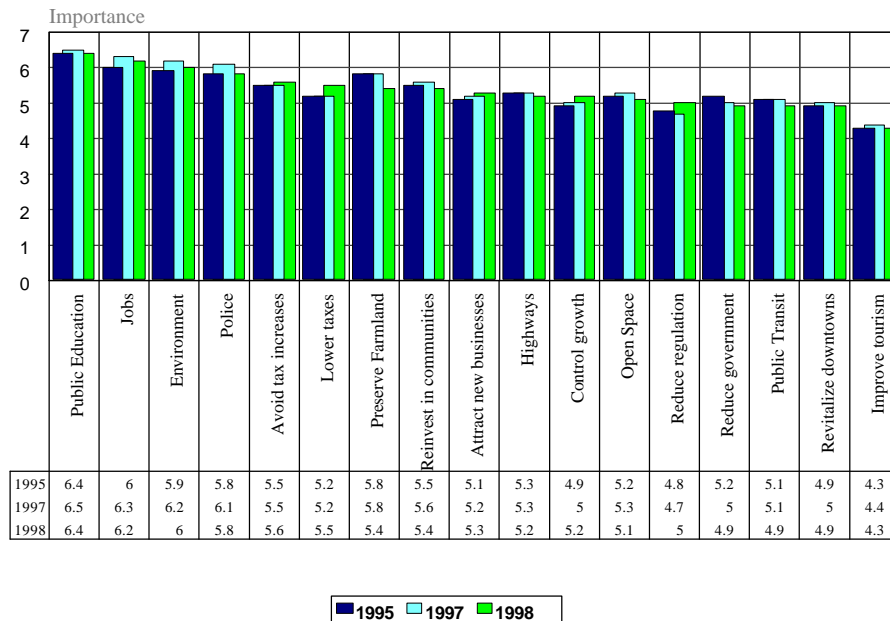
There are a variety of reasons why this difference in priorities could arise. One potential source is that the age distribution of those moving in is different than those currently living here. (Unfortunately, there is no way to interview the people who have left the state since 1990.) In Figure 5.4 below, there are significant differences between the those longer term residents and recent arrivals. Recent arrivals are identified by “***” next to the appropriate age group. In Kent County, the youngest age group is much larger, and the middle age group is smaller. That may be influenced by the age of Dover Air Base personnel. The 65+ group is approximately the same size in both samples. In New Castle County, younger people are also over represented relative to longer-term residents. That is almost certainly influenced by the students coming to the University of Delaware. The in-migration of people in the 65+ category is significantly less (4.1% compared to 17.5%). In Sussex County, the distribution is much more uniform. Certainly, the youngest group does not have the same influence as was seen in Kent and New Castle. In comparison, 60% of the newer residents are over 40 years of age in Sussex while only 40% are of that age in Kent and Sussex counties.

Age does make a difference in the suggested state priorities. This is shown in Figure 5.5 below. The areas that are statistically different are marked with “***”. The younger group tends to be less

concerned with *controlling growth, acquiring open space, improving tourism, and preserving farmland*. The middle age group is concerned with *improving the environment, controlling growth* and *open spaces*, but it also is concerned with *avoiding tax increases*, and *reducing the size of government*.

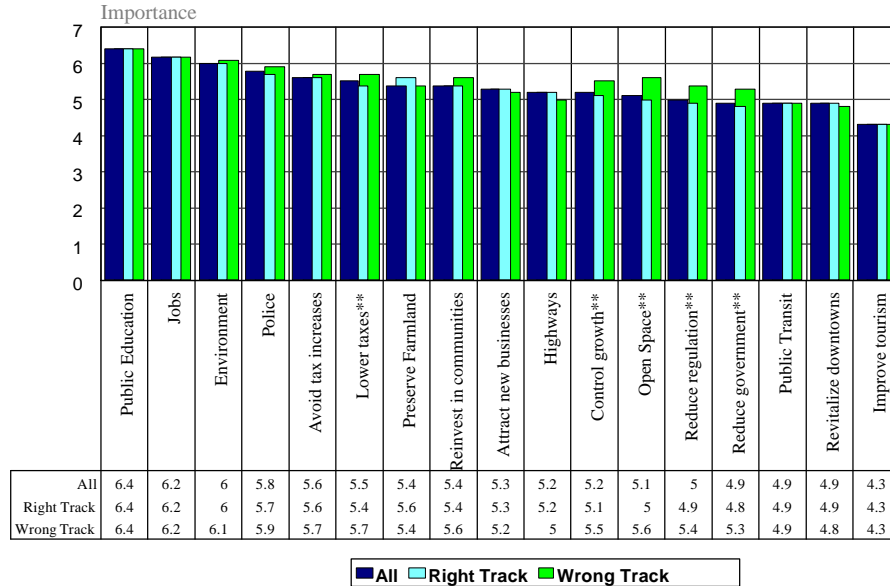
In the final analysis, everyone seems to agree on the top four areas. There is a strong consensus that *improving public education* and *developing jobs* are at the top of this agenda. Both are important to maintaining a strong and healthy economy. These are closely followed by *improving the environment* and *police protection*, both of which influence our personal well-being. Indirectly, they both can have a strong influence on attracting the labor force needed to power Delaware's economy in the next decade.

Figure 5.1
State Priorities:
1995-1998



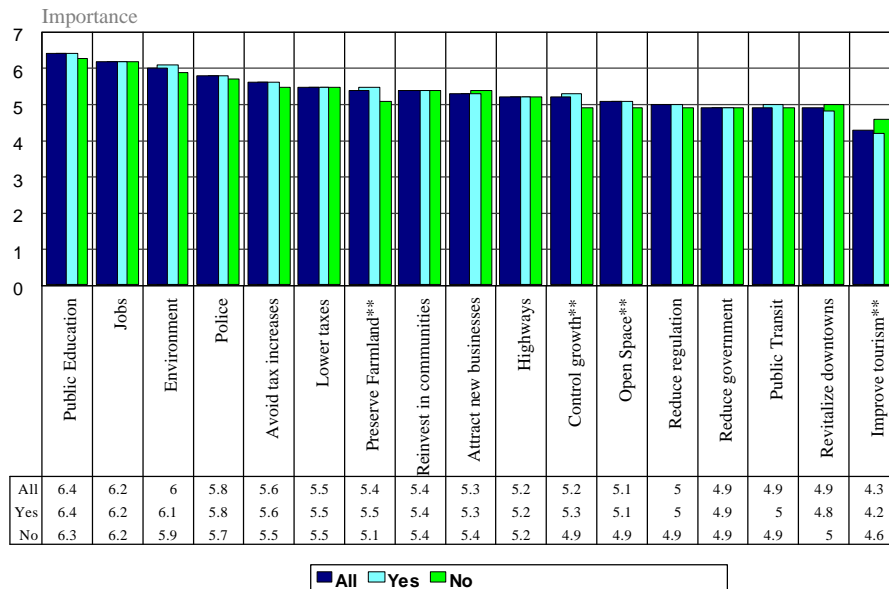
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 5.2
State Priorities
by Delaware's Direction in 1998



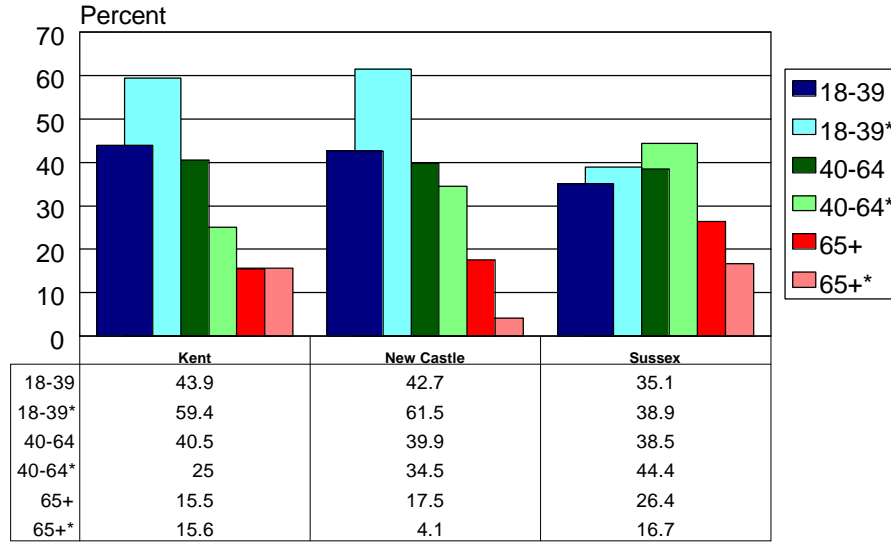
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 5.3
State Priorities
by Resident in 1990



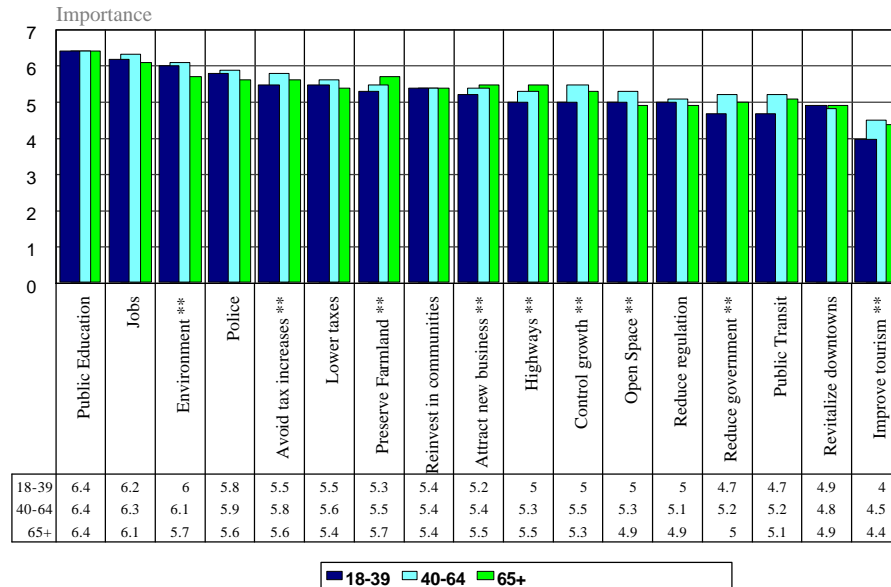
Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 5.4
Impact of New Migrants
by County and Age



Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware

Figure 5.5
State Priorities
by Age Group



Source: Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware