

Quality of Life

Four out of five Americans say the area where they live has the right amount of people or is already overcrowded.¹

- 53% say their area has “about the right amount of people.”
- 30% say their area is “too crowded, with more people than it can handle.”
- Only 16% of Americans say their area “doesn’t have enough people and needs to promote more growth.”

Happiness

Population growth - driven almost entirely by immigration policy² - increases the GDP, but does not correlate with happiness. In fact, it has a point of diminishing returns in the form of greater inequality, longer commutes, unaffordable housing, and a degraded environment. Increased density can mitigate the impact this development has on nature and open space, but it cannot offset the losses. Higher densities also lead to higher rates of mental illness and stress³, which is why most people go to beautiful, calm, open areas to relax and unwind.

According to The Happiness Research Institute:

- Quality of work, family life, and community are essential to happiness.⁴
- People are generally happier in countries with greater equality, even if those countries are poor.⁵
- To prevent misery, governments should consider well-being and environmental policy dimensions jointly in order to ensure the happiness of future generations.⁶

¹ CBS News Poll, May 17-19, 2023. <https://www.scribd.com/document/646948329/cbsnews-20230521-SUN#>

² Sandra Johnson, A Changing Nation: Population Projections Under Alternative Immigration Scenarios, Current Population Reports, U.S. Census, 2020. <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/demo/p25-1146.pdf>

³ John S. Ji, ScD; Runsen Chen, DPhil; [Bin Zhao, PhD](#). Megacity, Microscale Livable Space, and Major Depression. *Jama Open Network*. 2021. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2785606>

⁴ John F. Helliwell, Richard Layard, Jeffrey D. Sachs, Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, Lara B. Akinin, and Shun Wang. World Happiness Report, Executive Summary. [The Happiness Institute](#). 2023. <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2023/executive-summary/>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Updated: May, 2024

An immigration policy that allows for a stable number of Americans will increase happiness and quality of life.

- More economic freedom
- Greater equality
- Better commutes (and more time with family and community)
- Healthier environment

Economic freedom

“Simply put, being too large is a disadvantage in terms of achieving high levels of economic freedom.” - [Professor Russell Sobel](#), senior fellow at the Fraser Institute and author of *The Determinants of Subnational Economic Freedom*.⁷

- The optimal population size for states is 9.5 million, after which economic freedom begins to decline.⁸
- The optimal size for cities is 3 million.⁹

“A smaller labor market could present employers with a world where workers have more bargaining power and can therefore demand wage increases that are equal to, possibly even greater than, the rate of productivity growth.” - [Dean Baker](#), senior economist at the Center for Economic and Policy Research¹⁰

Equality

- “It’s not just a coincidence that the period of strongest income gains for middle-class and poor families — starting in the 1940s — followed, and overlapped with, a period of falling immigration.” - [David Leonhardt](#), *The New York Times*¹¹
- “If you increase the supply of labor, basic economics tells us that it will depress the price of labor (i.e., wages).” - [Sal Khan](#), [Analysis of Income Inequality in the U.S.](#)¹²

⁷ Russell Sobel, “When provincial and state populations exceed 9.5 million, government spending and taxes tend to increase; implications for Ontario, California and New York,” Fraser Institute News Release, <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/fraser-institute-news-release-provincial-090000610.html>.

⁸ Russell S. Sobel. The Determinants of Subnational Economic Freedom: An Analysis of Data for Seven Countries with Implications for Optimal Jurisdiction Size. Fraser Institute. 2021. <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/studies/the-determinants-of-subnational-economic-freedom>. See also: <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/fraser-institute-news-release-provincial-090000610.html>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Dean Baker, “The “Aging Crisis” Is Actually Just a Labor Crisis for the Wealthy,” *Truthout*, July 22, 2019. <https://truthout.org/articles/the-aging-crisis-is-actually-just-a-labor-crisis-for-the-wealthy/>

¹¹ Leonhardt. “The Hard Immigration Questions.” *The New York Times*, July 17, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/17/opinion/immigration-trump-racism.html>

¹² Khan. Comment on “Sal Khan Explains Key Charts About Economic Inequality.” *The New York Times*, July 17, 2020. <https://tinyurl.com/y9plgwwp>

Better commutes

Population growth is the obvious reason commutes have become longer and more congested for Americans. Every study of happiness finds commutes to be a key factor in life satisfaction.

Healthier Environment

Preserving natural areas is important for the quality of life of humans. The presence of open space within and adjacent to our urban areas – and the assurance that this open space will outlast us – serves to counterbalance the stress and strain of modern life. Contact with nature and open space provides both physiological and psychological benefits.

- Living near green space can [add up to 2.5 years](#) to an American's life.¹³
- Access to nature can limit the impact of [life stress on children](#).¹⁴
- Exposure to greenspace is associated with a wide range of health outcomes, including decreased blood pressure, stroke, hypertension, asthma, and coronary heart disease.¹⁵

¹³ Kim, Kyeezu, et. al. Inequalities in urban greenness and epigenetic aging: Different associations by race and neighborhood socioeconomic status. *Science Advances*. June 28, 2023. <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.adf8140>. See also: "Living near green spaces could add 2.5 years to your life, new research finds," by Allyson Chiu, *The Washington Post*, June 28, 2023. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/2023/06/28/aging-green-spaces-nature-health/>

¹⁴ Wells, N. M., & Evans, G. W. (2003). Nearby nature: A buffer of life stress among rural children. *Environment and Behavior*, 35(3), 311–330. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916503035003001>

¹⁵ Caoimhe Twohig-Bennett, Andy Jones, The health benefits of the great outdoors: A systematic review and meta-analysis of greenspace exposure and health outcomes, *Environmental Research*, Volume 166, 2018, Pages 628-637, ISSN 0013-9351, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2018.06.030>. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0013935118303323>)