

# California Relocation Evaluation Summary

*Research framework and zone comparison*

The following criteria were fully considered and weighted in the search for a California city that improves family proximity while still fitting the kind of daily life we want: energy, activities, community, access, and long-term livability. Research drew from city websites, crime statistics, weather records, maps, traffic patterns, real estate trends, community bulletins, local discussions, and citizen reports.

	Criteria	What was weighed
1	<a href="#">Location Fit</a>	Family distance, drive stress, airport reach, and daily regional fit.
2	<a href="#">Home Requirements</a>	Budget, layout, yard, guest space, and no-compromise home filters.
3	<a href="#">Neighborhood Quality</a>	Feel of the area, pride of ownership, noise, walkability, and everyday comfort.
4	<a href="#">Health Care Access</a>	Hospital systems, specialists, urgent care, and reliability of medical access.
5	<a href="#">Outdoor and Dog Fit</a>	Yard safety, trails, green space, and everyday outdoor use with a dog.
6	<a href="#">Climate and Environment</a>	Heat, snow, air quality, fire risk, and broader environmental comfort.
7	<a href="#">Daily Living Practicality</a>	Errands, shopping, restaurants, services, and routine convenience.
8	<a href="#">Financial Impact</a>	Property taxes, insurance, cost load, and long-term affordability.
9	<a href="#">Safety and Comfort</a>	Street feel, nuisance factors, privacy, and day-to-day peace of mind.
10	<a href="#">Long-Term Suitability</a>	Aging in place, maintenance, resale strength, and staying debt-free.
	<a href="#">Zone Matrix</a>	Criteria-by-zone comparison table that also defines the five comparison zones.

## 1. Location Fit

- Distance to both children was a primary screen, not an afterthought.
- Drive stress mattered more than raw miles. A shorter drive with bad traffic was not automatically better.
- Airport access had to support frequent family travel without turning each trip into a full-day project.
- Regional fit had to match how we actually live, not just how a place photographs.

## 2. Home Requirements

- Home size, yard, layout, guest space, and purchase price were weighed together.
- A single story was preferred, but the real requirement was a workable main-floor primary suite.
- No condo path. No age-restricted community. No home that feels like a compromise from day one.
- The house had to support real daily living, dog use, and family visits without forcing major renovation.

## 3. Neighborhood Quality

- We looked for standard multi-generational neighborhoods, not gated or status-driven environments.
- Pride of ownership, noise level, traffic patterns, and walkability were all weighed.
- The question was simple: would daily life feel easy and comfortable here, or guarded and irritating?
- A neighborhood could look good on paper and still fail on feel.

## 4. Health Care Access

- Health systems, hospital quality, specialist access, and urgent care mattered heavily.
- This was not just about nearby buildings. It was about realistic access to reliable care.
- Areas with weak healthcare depth lost ground even when they had other strengths.

## 5. Outdoor and Dog Fit

- The yard had to be truly usable, not just technically fenced.
- Dog safety included snake exposure, trail access, water hazards, and routine walking comfort.
- We weighed nearby green space, trees, and the ability to get outside without making it a production.

## 6. Climate and Environment

- Heat profile, winter comfort, air quality, fire risk, and broader environmental burden were all considered.
- Dry, harsh, or barren-feeling places lost points even if they were practical in other ways.
- We wanted a place that feels livable year-round, not just survivable.

## 7. Daily Living Practicality

- Groceries, Costco, restaurants, shopping, and normal errands all mattered.
- The right city should reduce friction, not add layers of driving and logistics.
- Convenience was not treated as laziness. It was treated as quality of life.

## 8. Financial Impact

- Purchase price was only the opening number.
- Property taxes, insurance exposure, utilities, and long-term carrying cost all had to make sense.
- A city could be appealing and still fail because the full cost load was wrong.

## 9. Safety and Comfort

- We weighed crime data, street feel, backyard privacy, nuisance noise, and general ease of mind.
- This category also included the less obvious irritants that wear on daily life over time.
- A place did not need to feel perfect, but it did need to feel workable and calm.

## 10. Long-Term Suitability

- The final test was whether the city still made sense years from now.
- That included aging in place, maintenance burden, resale strength, and staying debt-free.
- A place could be exciting in the short run and still be wrong for the long run.

## Zone Comparison Matrix

This matrix compares the five zones against the main criteria and also defines the zones used in the search.

Zone	Cities / area represented	Current status
Folsom Zone	Folsom, Fair Oaks, Granite Bay, and nearby Sacramento-area contenders.	Strong
Santa Rosa Zone	Santa Rosa area with related Sonoma County options such as Petaluma and Rohnert Park.	Possible
Salinas Zone	Salinas branch, including nearby Bay-adjacent and Central Coast options such as Morgan Hill, Gilroy, Hollister, and Scotts Valley.	Weak
Santa Clarita Zone	Santa Clarita branch, including LA-adjacent comparisons such as Camarillo, Carpinteria, and Calabasas.	Revisit
SoCal Zone	Southern California branch, mainly Irvine, Murrieta, Escondido, and similar family-suggested comparisons.	Weak

### Fit key:

Strong = clear fit

Possible = workable with tradeoffs

Revisit = not ruled out but not currently favored

Weak = materially behind the better options

Criteria	Folsom Zone	Santa Rosa Zone	Salinas Zone	Santa Clarita Zone	SoCal Zone
Location	Strong	Possible	Weak	Possible	Weak
Home	Strong	Possible	Weak	Possible	Weak
Neighborhood	Strong	Possible	Weak	Revisit	Weak
Healthcare	Strong	Possible	Weak	Possible	Possible
Outdoor	Strong	Possible	Weak	Possible	Weak
Climate	Possible	Possible	Weak	Strong	Possible
Living	Strong	Possible	Weak	Possible	Weak
Financial	Possible	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak
Safety	Strong	Possible	Weak	Revisit	Weak
Long-term	Strong	Possible	Weak	Revisit	Weak

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