

Executive Summary

Nationwide, a number of studies have examined the impact of trails on the nearby property and community, and generally shown that trails had a positive impact on property values and had improved or had no impact on residents' quality of life. However, there's a lack of a local study examining the public perceptions of the MKT Trail's impact to guide planning and management decisions in Columbia, Missouri. Therefore, Columbia Parks and Recreation Department and Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department of the University of Missouri conducted a mail survey of property owners living within 200 yards of the MKT Trail to find out how the trail affects nearby residents and their property.

Participants in this study were 149 property owners who live near the MKT Trail. Responding residents owned/ occupied the property near the MKT Trail for an average of 18 years. They use the trail mostly for health and exercise and most used the trail on a weekly basis. The majority were white. Most were 50 years or older, with no child living at home. Most respondents had a relatively high annual household income (65% earned over \$100,000 annually).



Property owners were satisfied living adjacent to the MKT Trail and indicated the trail had improved their quality of life. A majority of respondents would choose to live near a trail again if they were to move. Most MKT neighbors thought the trail will make their property more desirable and valuable if listed for sale.



Overall, respondents ranked potential benefits of living near the MKT Trail very high and ranked potential problems of living next to the trail relatively low. Results indicated that promoting the trail's benefit for non-motorized transportation, promoting community pride for the trail and better addressing people's concerns about trail safety could increase the already high customer satisfaction levels.

Ninety-eight (66%) of the respondents provided comments. A large majority of them expressed love for the trail and indicated a positive feedback. Nine themes emerged from these comments such as seeing the trail as a community asset, enjoying easy access to the trail, enjoying nature and outdoors.

Major Findings at a Glance



94% of property owners living near the MKT Trail are very satisfied (70%) or satisfied (24%) with having the MKT Trail as a neighbor.



89% of the MKT neighbors indicated that the trail has improved their quality of life.



77% of those who bought/occupied property during/after the MKT Trail development indicated the trail had a positive influence on their purchasing decisions. (17% no impact, aware of trail, 5% no impact, not aware of trail, 1% negative)



72% of property owners would choose to live near a trail again if they were to move. (24% not sure, 5% no)



71% of property owners believed the trail would make their property easier to sell (15% no effect, 10% don't know, 1% more difficult to sell) and 56% believed the trail increased their property value (26% no effect, 18% don't know).



A majority (66% to 93%) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed on all 8 trail benefits.
Only a small portion (5%-13%) reported they agreed or strongly agreed with 8 potential concerns.