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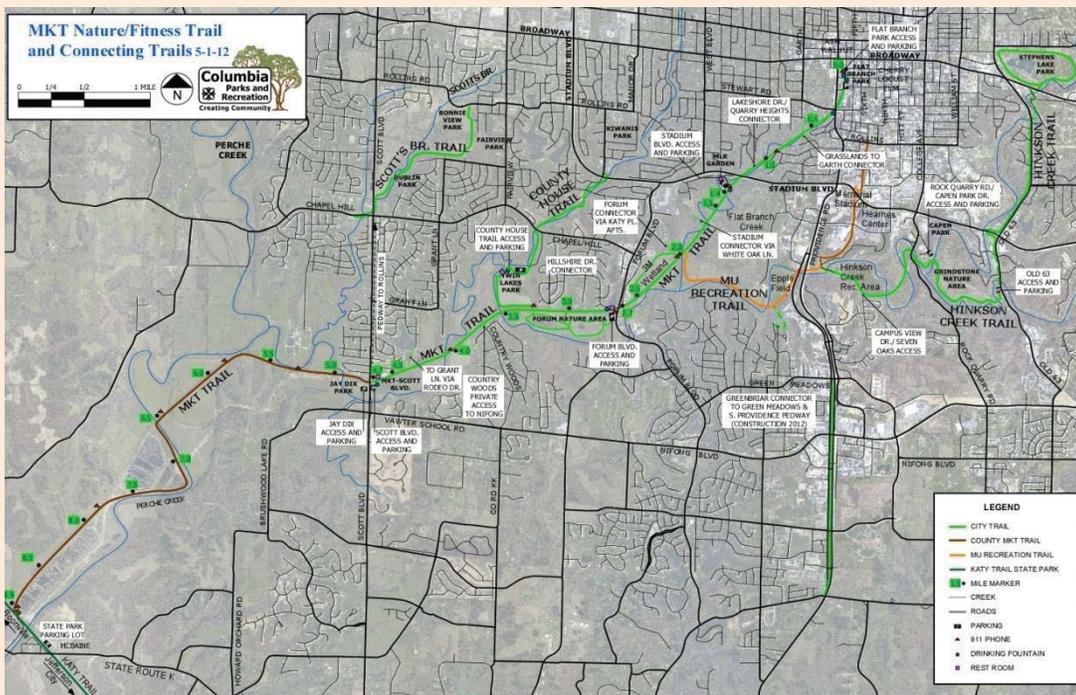
Introduction

Trails have been shown to offer a variety of benefits including creating healthy recreation and transportation opportunities, enhancing environmental, historic and cultural preservation, increasing property value and economic opportunities, as well as elevating quality of life and community identity [1,2]. Despite these benefits, some concerns have been expressed by homeowners. Critics of new trail development continue to raise questions about the suitability of trails in neighborhoods. Such concerns include apprehension that trails will lower property values, increase crimes, cause traffic and parking problems and affect privacy of nearby residents.

To address these concerns, several studies have shown that nearby residents tend to view the trail as positive or neutral amenities that increase or have no impact on property values and have little impact on public safety [2-4]. However, there has been a lack of local voice

from Columbia citizens about the trail's impact especially for those residents who own properties close to a trail. **Therefore, this study aims to examine the impact of a major trail on nearby residents and their property in Columbia, Missouri.**

The MKT Trail is the most popular recreational multi-use trail for bicycling, hiking, jogging, walking, cross country skiing, and fitness exercise in Columbia, Missouri. It is 8.9 miles long, in the right-of-way of the former Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad. The eastern 4.7 miles of the MKT Trail are managed by the city of Columbia, which links to the western 4.2 miles managed by Boone County, and connects with the Katy Trail, the longest rail-trail (over 200 miles) in the United States. The City-owned portion of the MKT Trail begins in downtown Columbia in Flat Branch Park to the southwest edge of the city at Scott Blvd (See Map Below).



Methodology

This project only focuses on the City-owned portion of the MKT Trail. A total of 213 owner-occupied properties within 200 yards of the MKT Trail were selected using ArcMap 10. Addresses of these properties were obtained through city assessor data. Two waves of surveys were mailed to these 213 property owners on December 20, 2012 and January 23, 2013. The mailing included a cover letter



(Appendix A, B) describing the project purpose, confidentiality and instructions, and a one-page questionnaire that asks residents' opinions of the MKT Trail (Appendix C). To encourage participation, a drawing ticket was included in the mailings that enabled participants to enter into a drawing to win a 20-visit pass to the ARC (Activity & Recreation Center). The data collection closed on February 8, 2013 and a total of 149 surveys were received with a response rate of 70% (149/213).

The questionnaire included 21 questions adapted from previous studies^[4-7] which collected information on how the participants

perceive the impact of MKT Trail on their property and their lives. Questions included how the MKT Trail impacts their property salability, property values and their quality of life. A five-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 3=neutral, 5=strongly agree) was used to measure the extent to which the participants agree or disagree on potential benefits of the trail. Potential concerns of living next to a trail were also measured on a similar five-point scale. The households' information such as their trail use, gender, race/ethnicity of the respondents, family members' age, and household income were also included in the survey.



Data presented in this report is organized into five sections: 1) respondents profile, 2) overall satisfaction and impact on quality of life, 3) impact on property salability and value, 4) perceived benefits and concerns, and 5) comments from MKT neighbors.