



Source: Parks and Recreation

*WJ*

Agenda Item No: REP 66-13

To: City Council

From: City Manager and Staff *MM*

Council Meeting Date: May 6, 2013

Re: Resident Survey: Impact of MKT Trail on Nearby Property Owners

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Parks & Recreation Department partnered with the University of Missouri's Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism to conduct a study that examined the impact of a major trail (MKT Trail) on nearby residents and their property. The survey was conducted by Dr. Sonja Wilhem Stanis, an assistant professor of Parks, Recreation and Tourism at the School of Natural Resources. She was assisted by a recent masters student, Hua Bai who worked as a intern conducting research for the Parks & Recreation Department. Attached is the University's official media release which summarizes the project as well as the study.

**DISCUSSION:**

The MKT Trail is the one of the most popular recreational multi-use trail for walking, biking, jogging, hiking, cross country skiing and fitness exercise in Columbia. The MKT Trail runs 8.9 miles 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 and extends to the southwest edge of the city at Scott Blvd.

Almost 150 property owners living within 200 yards of the MKT Trail near Columbia responded to the survey. Ninety-four percent said they were very satisfied (70 percent) or satisfied (24 percent) with having the MKT Trail as a neighbor.

Eighty-nine percent of the MKT neighbors indicated that the trail had improved their quality of life. Seventy-two percent said they would choose to live near a trail again if they were to move

Attached is a copy of the study.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact to this study.

**VISION IMPACT:**

<http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/Council/Meetings/visionimpact.php>

12 Vision Statement: A network of attractive and safe parks and recreational amenities are connected by trails and greenways that provide area residents with access to nature, recreation, and facilities for active play, both indoors and out.

12.4 Goal: An extensive, safe network of trails will accommodate a variety of users ranging from recreational to nonmotorized travelers. This network may include roadway and public transportation infrastructure to connect parks, neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.

**SUGGESTED COUNCIL ACTIONS:**

Staff is presenting this for informational purposes and is not recommending any formal council action.

FISCAL and VISION NOTES:					
City Fiscal Impact Enter all that apply		Program Impact		Mandates	
City's current net FY cost	\$0.00	New Program/ Agency?	No	Federal or State mandated?	No
Amount of funds already appropriated	\$0.00	Duplicates/Expands an existing program?	No	Vision Implementation impact	
Amount of budget amendment needed	\$0.00	Fiscal Impact on any local political subdivision?	No	Enter all that apply: Refer to Web site	
Estimated 2 year net costs:		Resources Required		Vision Impact?	Yes
One Time	\$0.00	Requires add'l FTE Personnel?	No	Primary Vision, Strategy and/or Goal Item #	12
Operating/ Ongoing	\$0.00	Requires add'l facilities?	No	Secondary Vision, Strategy and/or Goal Item #	12.4
		Requires add'l capital equipment?	No	Fiscal year implementation Task #	40

**From:** Mertens, Randall J.  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 09, 2013 11:41 AM  
**Subject:** MEDIA RELEASE - College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources

# UNIVERSITY *of* MISSOURI

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NATURAL RESOURCES

MEDIA RELEASE

APRIL 10, 2013

## Happy Trails

### Study shows property owners near the MKT Trail are pleased with it

COLUMBIA, Mo. - Almost 20 years ago when Missouri's MKT Nature and Fitness Trail opened, property owners adjoining the recreational park worried that they would experience an increase in crime, trespassing and vandalism, and lower property values. A 2013 University of Missouri survey of land owners indicates that they are not only happy with the trail, but think their property is more valuable because of it.

The survey was conducted by [Sonja Wilhelm Stanis](#), assistant professor of [Parks, Recreation and Tourism](#) at the [School of Natural Resources](#), and Hua Bai, a recent graduate of the program and a park research assistant for the [City of Columbia](#).

Almost 150 property owners living within 200 yards of the [MKT Trail](#) near Columbia responded to the survey. Ninety-four percent said they were very satisfied (70 percent) or satisfied (24 percent) with having the MKT Trail as a neighbor.

Eighty-nine percent of the MKT neighbors indicated that the trail had improved their quality of life. Seventy-two percent said they would choose to live near a trail again if they were to move, Bai said.

"Overall, respondents ranked potential benefits of living near the MKT trail very high and potential problems of living next to the trail relatively low," Wilhelm Stanis said. "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."

The survey also found that 23 percent of property owners used the trail 5-7 times a week, and 47 percent used it 1-4 times a week. Only 10 percent of respondents said they never used the MKT Trail.

The MKT trail is the most popular recreational multi-use trail for bicycling, hiking, jogging, walking, cross country skiing and fitness exercise in Columbia. The MKT Trail runs 8.9 miles 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 and extends to the southwest edge of the city at Scott Blvd.

Three out of four respondents bought their home during or after the MKT Trail development. Of those residents, 77 percent indicated that the trail had a positive influence on their purchasing decisions. Seventeen percent reported that the trail had no influence on their decisions, although they were aware of the trail. A small portion of respondents (five percent) indicated the trail had no influence as they were not aware of the trail. Seventy-one percent of property owners believed the trail will make their property easier to sell.

The survey asked about crime along the trail. Ninety-two percent of respondents reported nothing stolen or vandalized by a trail user. Four percent reported that they had suffered theft from their property, three reported their property had been vandalized, and two percent had reported both.

= 30 =

**CONTACT:** Sonja Wilhelm Stanis, Assistant Professor, Parks, Recreation and Tourism, College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, University of Missouri. [573-882-9524](tel:573-882-9524). [sonjaws@missouri.edu](mailto:sonjaws@missouri.edu)

**MEDIA SUPPORT:** Randy Mertens, Media Coordinator, College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri 65211. [573-882-3237](tel:573-882-3237). [mertensr@missouri.edu](mailto:mertensr@missouri.edu)



# **IMPACT OF THE MKT TRAIL ON NEARBY PROPERTY OWNERS**

## **MKT Trail Residents Survey Technical Report**



Presented to  
**Columbia Parks and Recreation Department**

Prepared by  
**Hua Bai, M.S.**  
**Sonja Wilhelm Stanis, Ph.D.**  
University of Missouri

# 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.



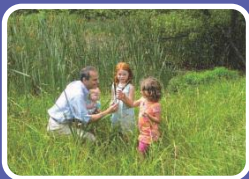
## Major Findings at a Glance



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



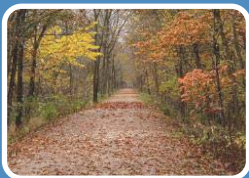
89% of the MKT neighbors indicated that the trail has improved their quality of life.



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.

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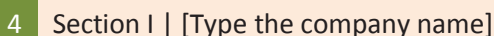
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Trails have been shown to offer a variety of benefits including creating healthy recreation and transportation opportunities, enhancing environmental, historic and cultural preservation, increasing property value and economic opportunities, as well as elevating quality of life and community identity<sup>[1,2]</sup>. 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<sup>[2-4]</sup>. However, there has been a lack of local voice

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<sup>[4-7]</sup> 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.

# Section I

## Respondents Profile

### ➤ DEMOGRAPHICS

Responding residents have owned/ occupied the current property near the MKT Trail for an average of 18 years, ranging from six months to 79 years. They ranged in age from 24 to 91 years, with a mean age of 58 years. Three-fourths (75%) were 50 years and older. Respondents were about even male (51%) and female (49%). Most households (70%) did not have a child living at home. The majority of these respondents were White (92%, Figure 1), followed by Asian (3%), Hispanic or Latino (2%), Mixed (1%) and other (1%). Most respondents had an annual household income of \$100,000 or more (65%, Figure 2).



Figure 1

### Respondents' Race/Ethnicity

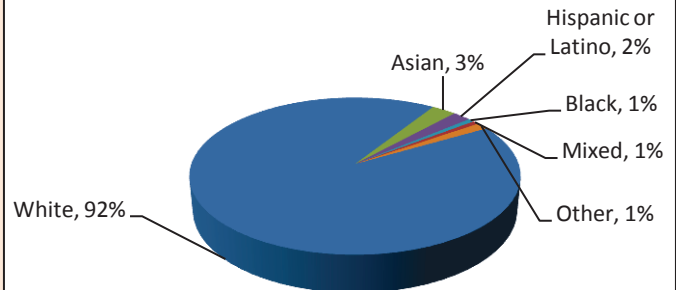
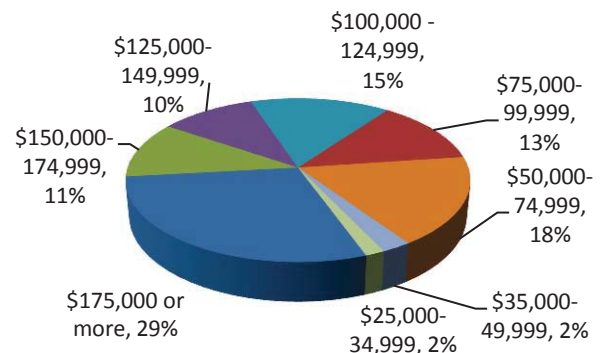


Figure 2

### Annual Household Income



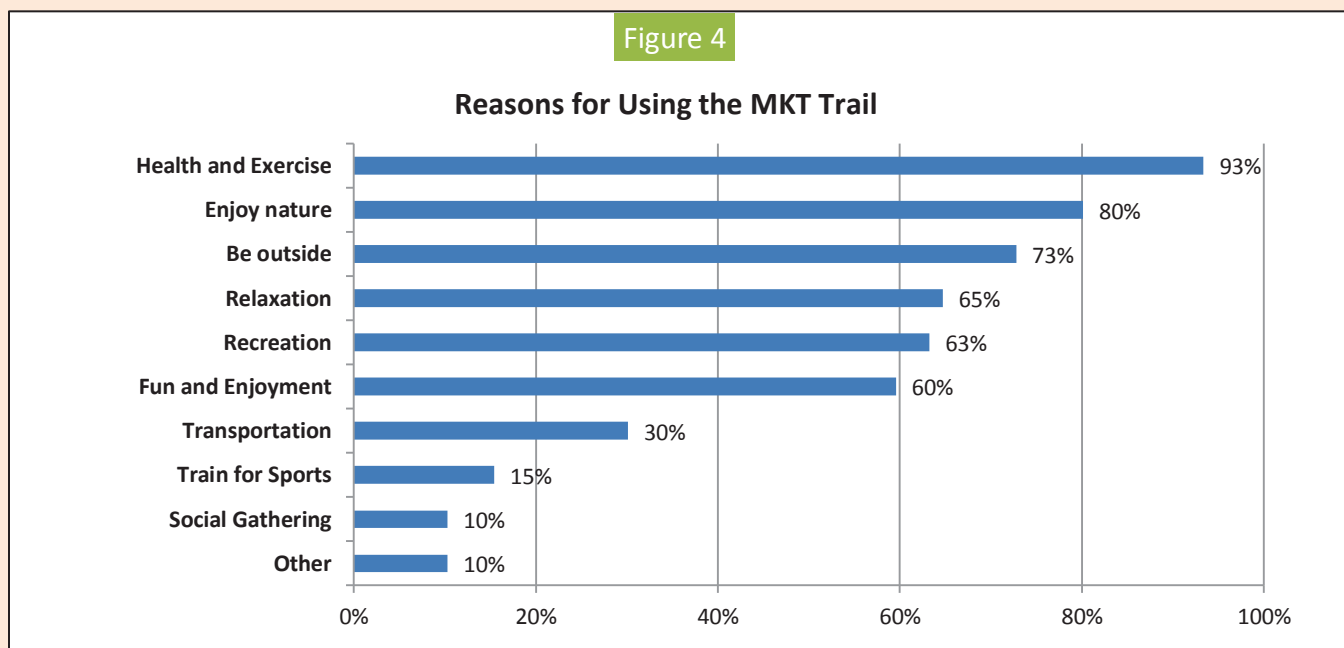
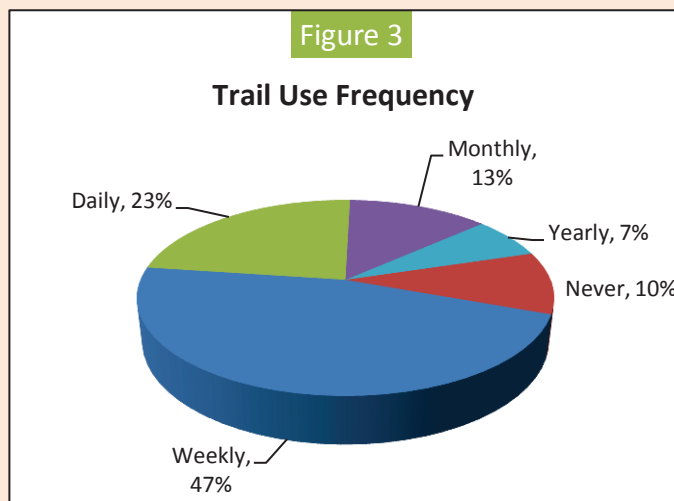
### ➤ TRAIL USE PATTERNS

Twenty-three percent (23%) of the respondents used the trail almost daily (5-7 days per week, Figure 3). Most respondents (47%) used the MKT Trail on a weekly basis (1-4 days per week,). Thirteen percent (13%) used the trail

monthly ( $\geq 4$  days per month). Seven percent (7%) respondents used the MKT Trail a couple of days ( $< 12$  days) per year. Finally, 10% of the respondents reported that they never used the MKT Trail.



The nearby property owners used the MKT Trail for a variety of purposes. They used it mostly for health and exercise (93%), followed by enjoying nature (80%), being outside (73%), relaxing (65%), recreation (63%) and for fun and enjoyment (60%, Figure 4). Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents reported that they used the trail for transportation, 15% used it to train for sports, and 10% used it for social gathering. Another 10% respondents indicated that they use the trail for other reasons such as dog walking and birding. The finding that most residents use the MKT Trail for health and exercise is consistent with the finding in Section VI of this report that most respondents appreciate the trail's benefit of promoting health and wellness of the community. Therefore, the MKT Trail is both perceived and used as a venue for exercise and health.



## Section II

### Satisfaction and Quality of Life

#### ➤ OVERALL SATISFACTION AND IMPACT ON QUALITY OF LIFE

Overall, 94% of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied living next to the MKT Trail (70% very satisfied, 24% satisfied; Figure 5). Five percent (5%) of the respondents were indifferent to living near the trail. Only 1% reported that they are unsatisfied. No one selected the choice of very unsatisfied.

Seventy-two percent (72%) of the respondents indicated that they would choose to live near a trail again if they were to move (Figure 6). 5% responded no and 24% responded not sure.

Eighty-nine percent (89%) reported that the trail has improved their quality of life (Figure 7). Eight percent (8%) reported no impact and 1% reported don't know. One respondent (1%) indicated that it has worsened the quality of life.



Figure 5

How satisfied are you with having the MKT Trail as a neighbor?

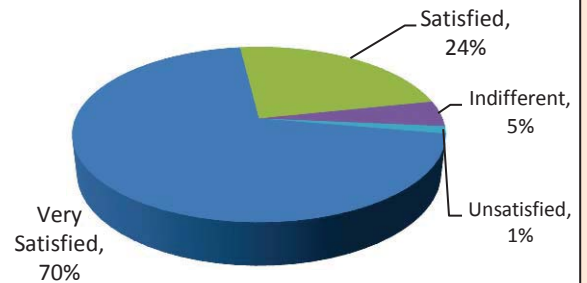


Figure 6

If you were to move, would you choose to live near a trail again?

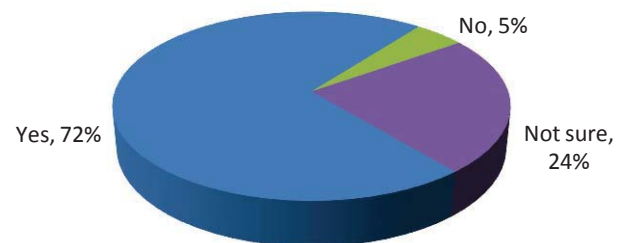
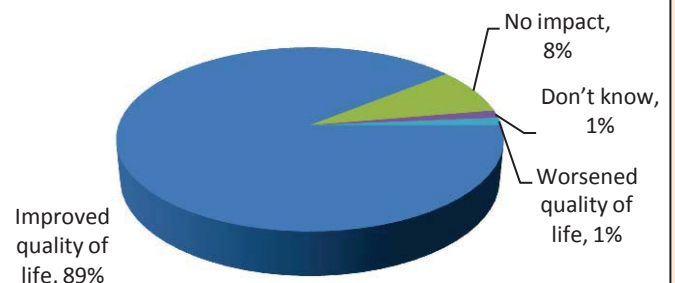


Figure 7

How does the MKT Trail impact your overall quality of life?



## ➤ IMPACT ON EXISTING RESIDENTS PRIOR TO TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

In order to better understand people's reaction to a trail being established in their neighborhood, analysis were applied to those existing residents who occupied/bought their homes before the MKT Trail development (37 households). All 37 residents owning their homes prior to the trail development reported that living near the MKT was better (15% much better, 38% better) or same (47%) as they expected, compare to their initial reaction to the idea of living near the trail (Figure 8). No one selected the choice of "worse than I expected" or "much worse than I expected".

For these 37 existing residents, a large majority (88%) were satisfied (54% very satisfied, 32% satisfied; Figure 9). Eight (8%) percent felt indifferent to the issue. Two respondents (5%) were not satisfied. The same two respondents (5%) also reported that the trail had worsened their quality of life. However, the majority of respondents thought the trail had improved (76%) or had had no impact (14%) on their quality of life (Figure 10). No one selected the choice of very unsatisfied.

Figure 8

**Would you say that living near the trail is better or worse than you expected it to be?**

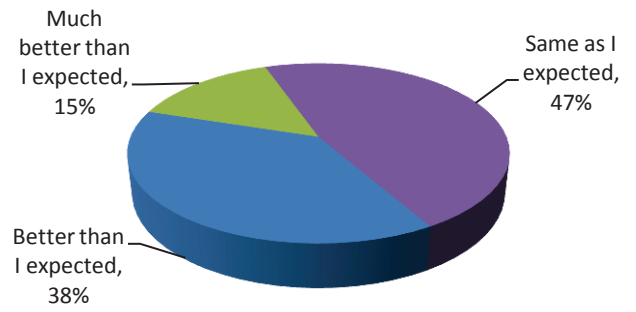


Figure 9

**Overall Satisfaction for Existing Residents Prior to Trail Development**

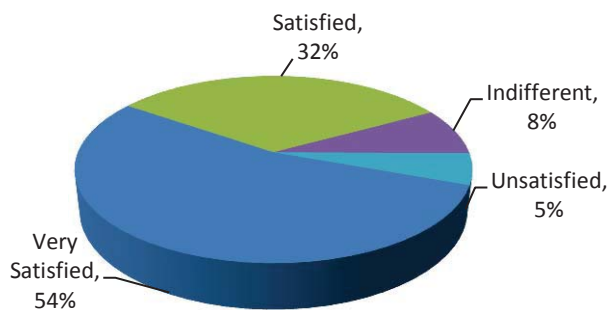
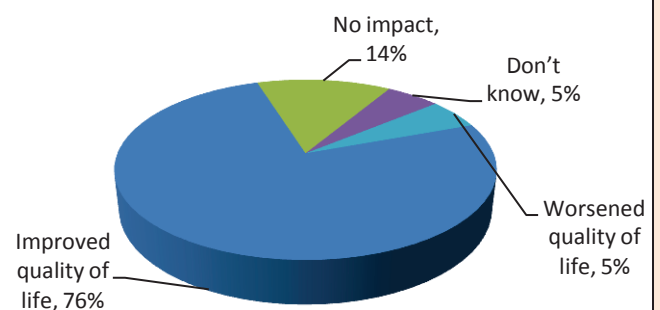


Figure 10

**Impact on Quality of Life for Existing Residents Prior to Trail Development**





## Section III

### Impact on Property Salability and Value

#### ➤ TRAIL'S IMPACT ON PROPERTY PURCHASING DECISIONS

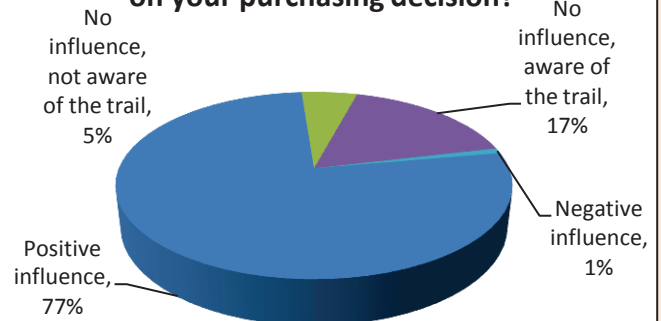
Three out of four (75%) respondents occupied/bought their home during/after the MKT Trail development. Of those residents, a large majority (77%) indicated that the trail had a positive influence on their purchasing decisions (Figure 11). Seventeen percent (17%) reported that the trail had no influence on their decisions, although they were aware of the trail. A small portion of respondents (5%) indicated the trail had no influence as they were not aware of the trail.



Only one person reported a negative influence. However, that person also indicated that, compared to that individual's initial reaction, living next to the trail is much better than was expected and indicated that the respondent is now satisfied with having the trail as a neighbor.

Figure 11

#### What influence did the MKT Trail have on your purchasing decision?

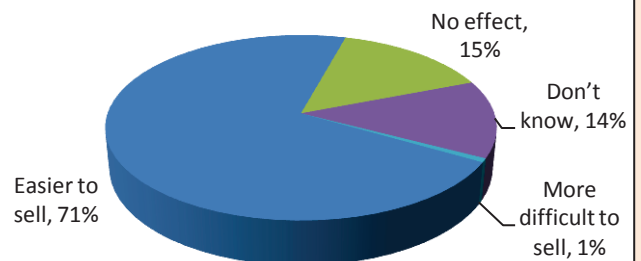


#### ➤ IMPACT ON PROPERTY SALABILITY

When asked about what effect the MKT Trail will have on the ease of selling their homes, 71% respondents reported that the trail will make their homes easier to sell, 15% indicated no effect and 10% reported don't know (Figure 12). One respondent thought the trail will make it more difficult to sell that individual's home.

Figure 12

#### What effect the MKT Trail will have on the ease of selling your home?

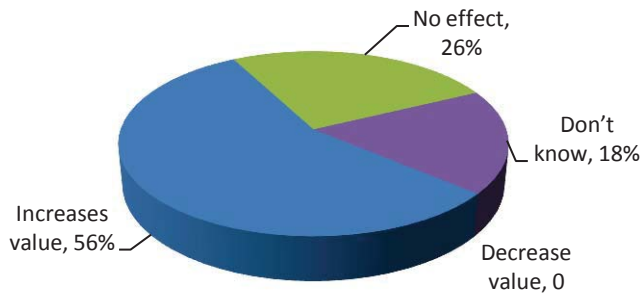


### ➤ IMPACT ON PROPERTY VALUE

Respondents were asked to report the approximate current value of their homes. The reported property value ranged from \$100,000 to \$750,000, with a median of \$275,000.

Figure 13

**What effect the MKT Trail will have on the resale price of your home?**



When asked about the MKT Trail's effect on the resale price of their homes, 56% of the respondents indicated that the trail will increase the resale value of their houses (Figure 13). About one quarter (26%) of the respondents indicated no effect and 18% reported don't know. No property owner indicated the MKT Trail will make their house decrease in value.



## Section IV

### Perceived Benefits and Concerns

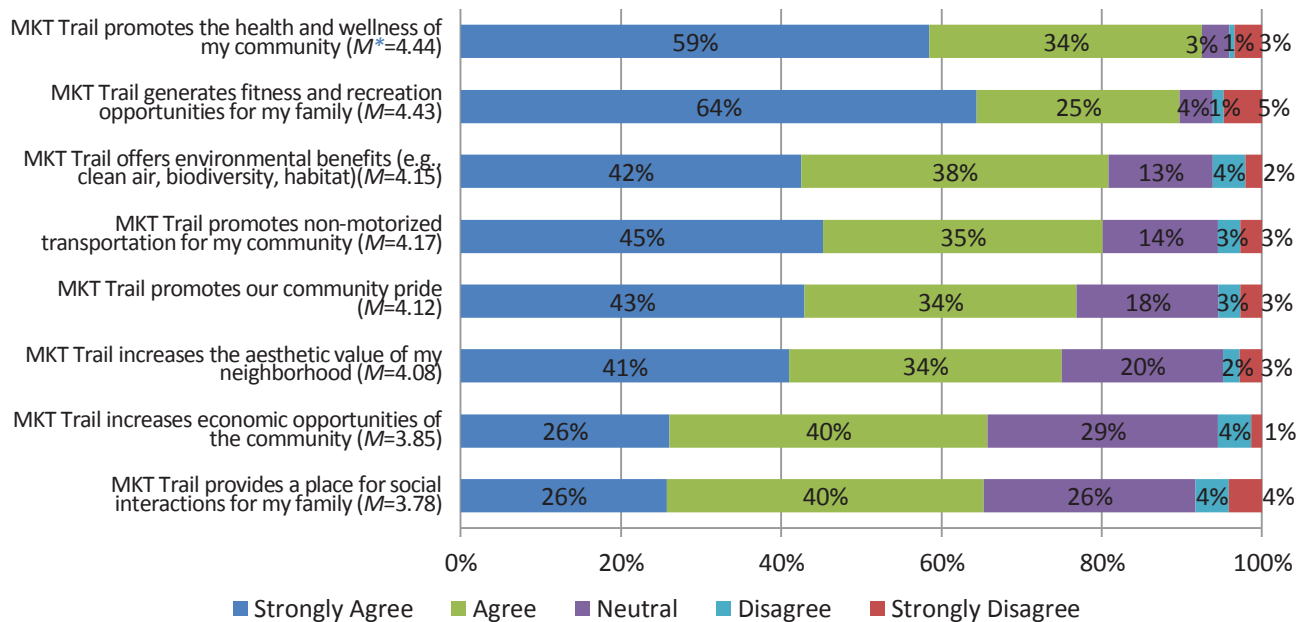
#### ➤ PERCEIVED BENEFITS

Eight benefits of the MKT Trail were examined in the questionnaire, asking the property owners to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each of the statements (1=Strongly Disagree, 3=Neutral, 5=Strongly Agree; Figure 14). Respondents had a very high rating on potential benefits of the MKT Trail ( $M=4.13$ ). A majority (66% to 93%) of the respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed on all eight benefits. Additionally, 3%-29% indicated they were neutral on each of the benefits.

Of the benefits, the highest percentage of respondents agreed that the MKT Trail promoted the health and wellness of the community (93%), followed by the MKT Trail generated fitness and recreation opportunities for the community (89%), offered environmental benefits (80%) and promoted non-motorized transportation for the community (80%).

Figure 14

#### Benefits of the MKT Perceived by MKT Trail neighbors



\* 1=Strongly Disagree, 3= Neutral, 5=Strongly Agree



## ➤ PERCEIVED POTENTIAL CONCERNS

Eight types of potential concerns of living near the MKT Trail were examined in the survey (Figure 15). Overall respondents had low concerns about living near the MKT Trail ( $M=1.96$ ). Only a small percentage of respondents (5%-13%) reported they agreed or strongly agreed with the listed concerns. The concern that the highest percentage of respondents had were decreased privacy (13%), increased trespassing (12%), increased traffic or parking problems (11%), and increased noise on their property (11%). They were least concerned about safety issues such as decreased safety in the neighborhood and decreased safety of kids and other family members.

Given previous studies have identified that property loss and vandalism is one of the largest concerns for property owners along trails, respondents were also asked to report

crimes on their property to better understand this issue. Actually, most respondents (92%) reported that nothing on their property had been stolen or vandalized by a trail user (Figure 16). Four percent (4%) reported that they had suffered theft from their property, 3% reported their property had been vandalized, and 2% reported both.

Figure 16

**Has a trail user stolen from or vandalized your property?**

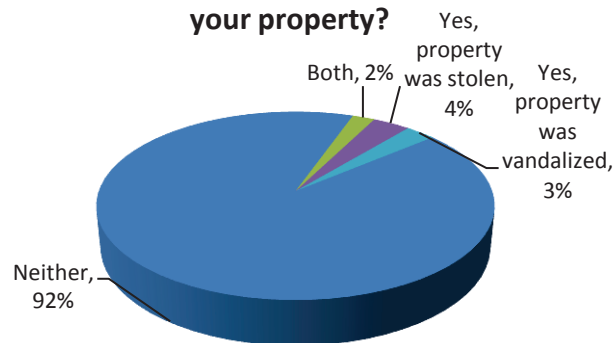
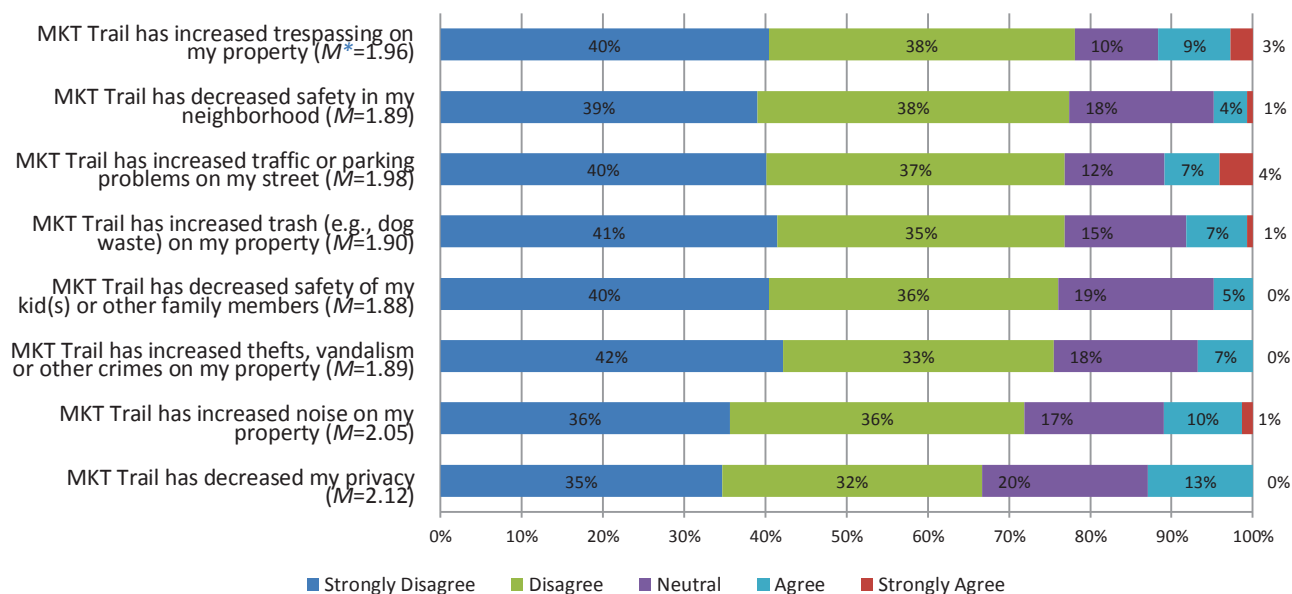


Figure 15

**Concerns of Living near the MKT Trail**



\* 1=Strongly Disagree, 3= Neutral, 5=Strongly Agree

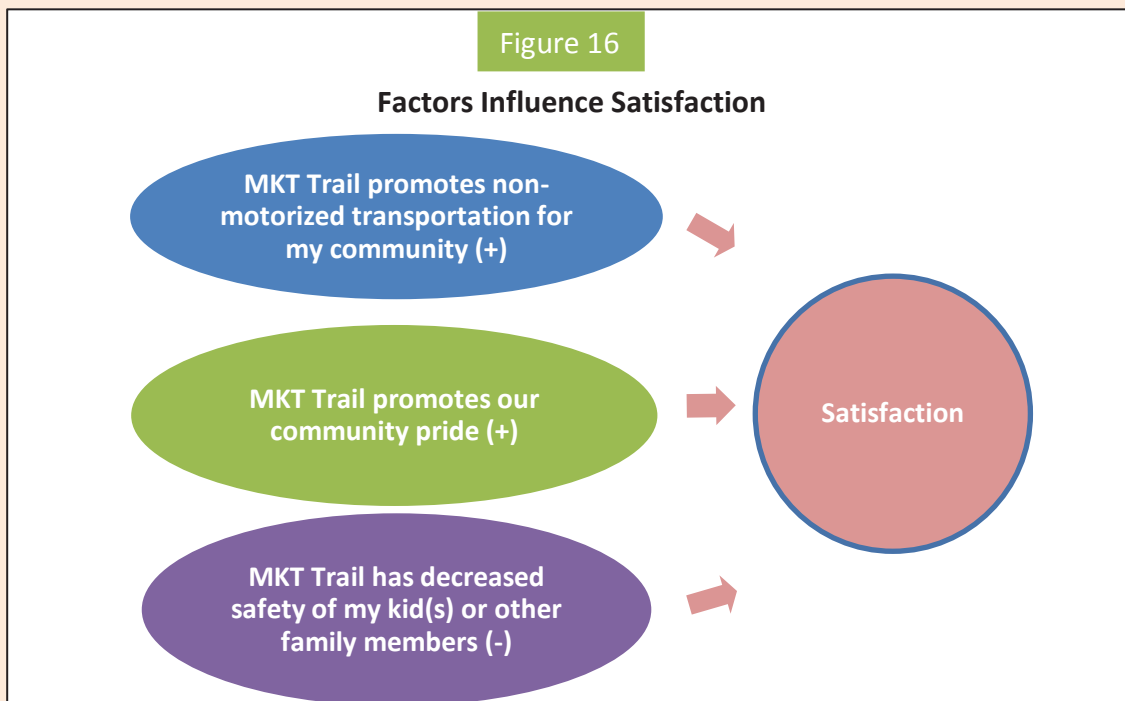
## ➤ FACTORS INFLUENCING SATISFACTION

To better understand how these benefits and concerns affect the overall residents' satisfaction, two binary logistic regression models were used to examine the relationship between these potential benefits and concerns, and satisfaction levels. Given the small sample of respondents indicating unsatisfied (n=2) and indifferent (n=7) perceptions, these two categories were excluded for analysis. Therefore, the binary logistic regression measures the possibility of changing from being satisfied to being very satisfied, as the ratings on benefits or concerns change. Both models controlled for gender, trail use frequency, income, and age as these factors may affect satisfaction as well.

The model examining benefits' relationship with satisfaction showed that the items "MKT

Trail promotes non-motorized transportation for my community" ( $\beta=1.13$ ,  $p=0.04$ ) and "MKT Trail promotes our community pride" ( $\beta=1.66$ ,  $p=0.02$ ) were positively associated with overall satisfaction (Figure 16). This result indicates that promoting the trail's benefit on non-motorized transportation and promoting community pride for the trail could increase the already high satisfaction levels.

The model on concerns revealed "MKT Trail has decreased safety of my kid(s) or other family members", which is the lowest rated concern, was negatively related with the possibility of the rating changing from "satisfied" to "very satisfied" ( $\beta=-3.27$ ,  $p=0.02$ ). Therefore, better addressing citizens' safety concern about their kids or other family members could positively affect overall satisfaction.



# Section V

## Comments from MKT Neighbors

At the end of the questionnaire, an open ended question was asked to respondents: “What would you say to people who are concerned about a trail being established near their homes? (Or other comments)”.

Ninety-eight respondents (66%) commented. To ensure reliability, dual coders analyzed the text for emergent themes and content analysis recorded the frequency that each theme emerged.

Most respondents had a positive feedback in the comment section indicating they had no concerns and expressed love for the trail. “Asset” is a word frequently used to describe the MKT Trail. People enjoyed having access to the trail, which offered opportunities of enjoying nature, outdoor recreation and convenient and safe transportation. Some indicated that the trail provided individual/family benefits for quality of life and health and provided social connections. A few respondents had some concerns and some

provided suggestions to potential trail neighbors and the managing agency. The frequency and percentage of each emerging theme is presented in Table 1.



Nine themes emerged related to: 1) general positive feedback; 2) community/neighborhood asset; 3) individual/family benefits; 4) enjoy access to the trail; 5) enjoy nature and outdoor recreation; 6) convenient and safe transportation; 7) social connections 8) suggestions; 9) concerns. Each of the themes is presented below with example respondent quotes.

**Table 1. Frequency and Percent of Themes from Respondents’ Comments**

Themes	frequency	%
<b>Theme 1: General positive feedback</b>	37	32%
<b>Theme 2: Community/neighborhood asset</b>	19	17%
<b>Theme 3: Individual/family benefits</b>	11	10%
<b>Theme 4: Enjoy access to the trail</b>	10	9%
<b>Theme 5: Enjoy nature and outdoor recreation</b>	11	10%
<b>Theme 6: Convenient and safe transportation</b>	5	4%
<b>Theme 7: Social connections</b>	4	4%
<b>Theme 8: Suggestions</b>	11	10%
<b>Theme 9: Concerns</b>	6	5%
<b>Total</b>	114	



➤ **THEME 1: GENERAL POSITIVE  
FEEDBACK/NO CONCERNS**

The majority of the responses were very positive in their feedback. Most MKT neighbors expressed their love for the trail and indicated that they have not had any problems living near it. This theme emerged 37 times. Below are some examples from respondent quotes:

*"I've never had disadvantage and I don't think I'll ever be able to live without it again."*

*"We had initial resistance, but today we couldn't find one person who is opposed."*

*"Best thing that could happen to them."*

*"The positives far outweigh any negatives."*

*"Don't be concerned. You would love it."*



➤ **THEME 2: COMMUNITY/NEIGHBORHOOD  
ASSET**

Many respondents mentioned the word "asset" to describe the MKT Trail. They expressed pride for having the trail and see the trail as an asset to the community. A couple of respondents mentioned that they would "show off" the MKT Trail to out-of-town visitors. This theme emerged 19 times. Below are some examples:

*"... We like to show it off to out-of-town visitors."*

*"It is a community asset that makes Columbia a better community."*

*"It's been a pleasure, fun and great community asset."*

*"Make it happen! It is a great asset."*



➤ **THEME 3: INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY BENEFITS  
(QUALITY OF LIFE & HEALTH, ETC.)**

A portion of respondents mentioned the trail has offered benefits such as boosting quality of life and providing health benefits to themselves and their families. This theme emerged 11 times. Here are some examples:

*"...and I get to exercise, relax."*

*"Our quality of life is much improved because of trail."*

*"Easy access to trails like MKT improves opportunities for quality fitness."*

*"Access to the trail has tremendous positive impact on our family's quality of life."*

➤ **THEME 4: ENJOY ACCESS TO THE TRAIL**

Respondents commented on their enjoyment of having the easy access to the MKT Trail and enjoyed the proximity. This theme emerged 10 times. Examples of respondent quotes are listed:

*"Access has made me use the trail more."*

*"We love having access to it."*

*"It's nice to have the trail nearby."*

*"...We love the trail and bought our home because of the close proximity to trail."*



➤ **THEME 5: ENJOY NATURE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION**

Some respondents mentioned their enjoyment of the nature and outdoor recreation in their comments. They expressed their enjoyment of being able to connect to nature and have outdoor recreational opportunities such as walking, running and biking. This theme emerged 11 times. Here are some quotes:

*"It provides wonderful recreational opportunities."*

*"We love hiking, biking running and viewing nature there."*

*"Learn to enjoy the out of doors again, like when we were young."*

*"It greatly increases our enjoyment of the outdoors."*

➤ **THEME 6: CONVENIENT AND SAFE TRANSPORTATION**

This theme emerged 5 times. Respondents indicated that the trail provided safe and convenient transportation that enabled them to go to other places. Below are some quotes:

*"It is our road to the Katy and biking to Rocheport and Hartsburg. I never want to live anywhere else!!!"*

*"Much safer to walk (maybe hit by a biker-not a car) on trail than ride a bike on unsafe bike trails on roads - especially at night."*

*"Living near the trail allows me to get downtown, work, crowded city events without paying for gas, parking meters (tickets). There's always a parking space for my bike."*

*"The trail provides a way to get around Columbia without the use of a car. Driving during peak traffic times, it is often faster to take the trail to get to places such as MU."*

➤ **THEME 7: SOCIAL CONNECTIONS**

A few respondents mentioned social connections on the trail such as meeting friends, knowing neighbors and interacting with users. Since this theme emerged 4 times, all quotes are presented below:



*"It is a good place to interact with people, frequent users or complete strangers."*

*"The trail has improved safety in our neighborhood because we know our neighbors better."*

*"...and meet friends too!"*

*"Get involved with opportunity of trail with special friends."*

#### ➤ **THEME 8: SUGGESTIONS**

Some respondents provided suggestions to potential trail neighbors and the managing agency. Suggestions to potential neighbors included building fences, picking up trash when they use the trail, and recognizing having a trail is a rare opportunity. Some suggested that the potential trail neighbors should not be concerned because trail users would not bother the property. Some advice to trail management agencies includes having trail patrols, paving the trail surface, and not putting up electrical lines. This theme emerged 11 times and all quotes are listed below:

*"Don't fear. The majority of people who use the trail are not concerned with bothering the property by the trail. They are there to enjoy the trail."*

*"Enjoy it; know it is rare to have."*

*"We are farther from the trail than most and have a natural environmental barrier of various trees and plants to protect our privacy."*

*"We installed a fence along the trail to prevent deer from entering our property; this has reduced or eliminated concerns about safety and security."*

*"Build a fence, or plant an impenetrable tree and brush line."*

*"Use it often, pick up any trash that you come across."*

*"Trail patrols on regular daily basis and phones on trail."*

*"...Would suggest some patrols of trails by bike police since there are occasional homeless people."*

*"A very small percentage of Columbia residents use the trail regularly. Those individuals (including me) should bear more of the maintenance costs than nonusers."*

*"Lack of paved surface makes the trail unusable 3 or 4 months a year."*

*"I would oppose the electrical lines that are proposed near the trail."*



#### ➤ **THEME 9: CONCERNS**

Although a majority of responses were positive about the MKT Trail, a few mentioned some concerns such as having strangers passing by and noise on the trail. However, these respondents indicated that they enjoyed living near the trail but would have concerns about these problems if their house adjoined the trail. Concerns emerged 6 times. All quotes in this theme are listed below:

*"Our house doesn't back to the trail, but I would not buy a house where random strangers were constantly passing - especially with young children."*



*"It will bring in strangers and make your neighborhood less safe and less private."*

*"Have people crossing property looking for trail access."*

*"Totally depends on closeness/proximity. I am aware of some thefts/ concerns by friends who adjoin the trail."*

*"I would have concerns. You probably do not have a choice. I cannot use my deck - too noisy. It would help a little if they would put the benches facing a different direction than my house."*

*"The process needs to listen to concerns and that can change the design plans to*

*accommodate everyone's concerns and desires. My neighborhood worked really hard to develop an acceptable plan. It was not helpful when people who didn't live in the neighborhood push their agenda of more trails."*





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## **APPENDIX A.**

### **Cover Letter for the First Mailing**

# CITY of COLUMBIA

## PARKS AND RECREATION

1 South 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Columbia, MO 65201



November 29, 2012

Dear Neighbor of the MKT Trail,

Columbia Parks and Recreation is conducting a survey of property owners living close to the MKT Trail to find out how the trail affects nearby residents and their property. Your household has been selected to take part in this project due to the proximity of your house to the MKT Trail. Through your participation, we can gain valuable knowledge of the trail's impact and better serve our community.

Enclosed with this letter is a brief questionnaire that asks a variety of questions about your thoughts toward the MKT Trail. This one-page questionnaire will only take about 5 minutes to complete. Your opinions are very important and will represent the collective views of local residents living near the MKT Trail. Results of this survey will also guide our planning and management decisions. Therefore, I hope you will strongly consider participating in this exciting project. If you choose to do so, please complete the survey form and return it to us by January 15, 2013.

To thank you for your time, those who participate are offered the opportunity to be entered into a drawing to win a 20-visit pass to the ARC (Activity and Recreation Center). If you would like to be entered into the drawing, please fill out attached drawing ticket and return it with your completed survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. We will mail the pass to the winner. In addition, we will make all the results from this survey available to the public on the City of Columbia website after the project is completed.

The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. You may decline answering any survey questions that you do not wish to complete. The information gained from this survey will only be reported as group data, at no time will your name be identified with any response. If you have any questions or would like any further information about this project, please do not hesitate to contact us.

On behalf of Columbia Parks and Recreation, thank you very much for your time and willingness to help us better serve our community!

Sincerely,

Mike Hood  
Director

Mike Snyder  
Superintendent, Park Planning and Development  
[mts@gocolumbiamo.com](mailto:mts@gocolumbiamo.com)  
573-874-7203

Hua Bai  
Park Planning Intern  
[hbai@gocolumbiamo.com](mailto:hbai@gocolumbiamo.com)  
573-639-2995

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### Drawing Ticket (optional)

If you would like to be entered into a drawing to win a 20-visit pass to the ARC, please enter your address below. All information will be kept confidential and stored separately from your completed survey.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX B.**

### **Cover Letter for the Second Mailing**



# CITY of COLUMBIA

## PARKS AND RECREATION

1 South 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Columbia, MO 65201



January 15, 2013

Dear Neighbor of the MKT Trail,

About four weeks ago, we mailed you a survey about the MKT trail's impact on your residence and property. If you have already returned your completed survey, please accept our most sincere gratitude. If you have not yet done so, please take some time to fill out the survey and return it.

Your household has been scientifically selected to represent the collective views of people living close to the MKT Trail. Only you can provide your thoughts that will give us a more complete picture of what the MKT Trail neighbors think. We want your opinions and preferences to be considered. Through participation, your input will help guide future planning and management decisions that may affect your own life as well as our community. For your convenience, we have enclosed another copy of the questionnaire and a postage-paid envelope in which to return it. Would you take a few minutes to give us your opinion by filling out this one-page questionnaire?

To thank you for your time, those who participate are offered the opportunity to be entered into a drawing to win a 20-visit pass to the ARC (Activity and Recreation Center). If you would like to be entered into the drawing, please fill out the attached drawing ticket and return it with your completed survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. We will mail the pass to the winner. In addition, we will make all the results from this survey available to the public on the City of Columbia website after the project is completed.

The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. The information gained from this survey will only be reported as group data, at no time will your name be identified with any response. You may decline answering any of the survey questions that you do not wish to complete. If you have any questions or would like any further information about this project, please do not hesitate to contact us.

On behalf of Columbia Parks and Recreation, thank you very much for your time and willingness to help us better serve our community!

Sincerely,

Mike Hood  
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Superintendent, Park Planning and Development  
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Hua Bai  
Park Planning Intern  
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573-639-2995

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### Drawing Ticket (optional)

If you would like to be entered into a drawing to win a 20-visit pass to the ARC, please enter your address below. All information will be kept confidential and stored separately from your completed survey.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX C.**  
**MKT Trail Residents Survey**

# MKT Trail Residents Survey

Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey about the impact of MKT Trail. Your responses will help us better deliver park and recreation services to our community. Please answer all the questions and save additional comments for the end.

## 1. Approximately how far (in feet) is the trail from your house?

- ☐ Less than 100 feet
- ☐ 100 to 300 feet
- ☐ 301 to 600 feet
- ☐ Greater than 600 feet

## 2. How often do you use the MKT Trail? (answer only one)

- ☐ Never (    ) Days per week (    ) Days per month (    ) Days per year

## 3. What do you use the MKT Trail for? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Do not use the MKT Trail
- ☐ Recreation ☐ Health and Exercise ☐ Transportation ☐ Relaxation ☐ Be outside
- ☐ Enjoy nature ☐ Train for sports ☐ Social gathering ☐ Fun and enjoyment ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. Did you occupy/buy home before or during/after MKT Trail development?

- ☐ Before – skip to question 6 ☐ During/after

## 5. If during/after, what influence did the MKT Trail have on your purchasing decision?

- ☐ Positive influence
- ☐ No influence, not aware of the trail
- ☐ No influence, aware of the trail
- ☐ Negative influence
- ☐ Don't know

## 6. What is the approximate current value of your home? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. What effect do you think the MKT Trail will have on the ease of selling your home?

- ☐ Easier to sell
- ☐ No effect
- ☐ More difficult to sell
- ☐ Don't know

## 8. What effect do you think the MKT Trail will have on the resale price of your home?

- ☐ Increases value
- ☐ No effect
- ☐ Decreases value
- ☐ Don't know

## 9. How does the MKT trail impact your overall quality of life?

- ☐ Improved quality of life
- ☐ No impact
- ☐ Worsened quality of life
- ☐ Don't know

## 10. Below are some benefits of trails to the adjacent residents. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement about the MKT Trail. (please circle answer)

Benefits	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. MKT Trail increases economic opportunities of the community	1	2	3	4	5
b. MKT Trail generates fitness and recreation opportunities for my family	1	2	3	4	5
c. MKT Trail promotes the health and wellness of my community	1	2	3	4	5
d. MKT Trail promotes non-motorized transportation for my community	1	2	3	4	5
e. MKT Trail offers environmental benefits (e.g., clean air, biodiversity, habitat)	1	2	3	4	5
f. MKT Trail increases the aesthetic value of my neighborhood	1	2	3	4	5
g. MKT Trail provides a place for social interactions for my family	1	2	3	4	5
h. MKT Trail promotes our community pride	1	2	3	4	5

Please Continue on the Back ➡

**11. Has a trail user ever stolen or vandalized your property?**

- ☐ Neither      ☐ Yes, property was stolen      ☐ Yes, property was vandalized

**12. Below are some concerns of residents living near a trail. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement about the MKT Trail. (please circle answer)**

Concerns	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. MKT Trail has increased thefts, vandalism or other crimes on my property	1	2	3	4	5
b. MKT Trail has increased trash (e.g., dog waste) on my property	1	2	3	4	5
c. MKT Trail has increased noise on my property	1	2	3	4	5
d. MKT Trail has increased trespassing on my property	1	2	3	4	5
e. MKT Trail has increased traffic or parking problems on my street	1	2	3	4	5
f. MKT Trail has decreased safety in my neighborhood	1	2	3	4	5
g. MKT Trail has decreased safety of my kid(s) or other family members	1	2	3	4	5
h. MKT Trail has decreased my privacy	1	2	3	4	5

**13. Overall, how satisfied are you with having the MKT Trail as a neighbor?**

- ☐ Very Satisfied  
☐ Satisfied  
☐ Indifferent  
☐ Unsatisfied  
☐ Very Unsatisfied

**14. Compare your initial reaction to the idea of living near the MKT Trail to how you feel about living near the trail today. Would you say that living near the trail is better or worse than you expected it to be?**

- ☐ Much Better than I expected  
☐ Better than I expected  
☐ Same as I expected  
☐ Worse than I expected  
☐ Much Worse than I expected

**15. If you were to move, would you choose to live near a trail again?**

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Not sure

**16. What is your gender?**      ☐ Male      ☐ Female

**17. What are the ages of adults and children in your household? (Fill in age for each person)**

My age: (     )      Other adults' ages: (     ) (     )

Children's ages (under 18 years): (     ), (     ), (     ), (     ), (     )

**18. How long have you occupied or owned the property close to the MKT Trail?**      (     ) Years

**19. What racial/ethnic category best describes you?**

- ☐ Asian      ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native      ☐ Hispanic or Latino      ☐ White  
☐ Black      ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander      ☐ Mixed      ☐ Other (     )

**20. What is your annual household income before taxes?**

- ☐ Less than \$25,000      ☐ \$50,000-74,999      ☐ \$125,000-149,999  
☐ \$25,000-34,999      ☐ \$75,000-99,999      ☐ \$150,000-174,999  
☐ \$35,000-49,999      ☐ \$100,000 -124,999      ☐ \$175,000 or more

**21. What would you say to people who are concerned about a trail being established near their homes? (Or other comments)**

**Thank you very much for completing this survey! Please return the survey with your drawing ticket (optional) in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.**