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2009 Mountain House Community Survey Analytic Summary

May 2009

Prepared for:

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Mountain House Community Services District

Background and Objectives

The Mountain House Community Services District (MHCS D) was formed in 1996 to “govern” the new community of Mountain House, CA. After the community had reached 1,000 voters, residents voted in November 2008 to elect a independent, resident Board of Directors. This Board would appoint the MHCS D General Manager who is responsible for all governmental and administrative activities. The Directors took office in December 2008 and immediately set to work, under challenging economic constraints, on the community’s strategic plan, including budgeting. As the Directors developed a set of priorities for this planning process, they were also very interested in hearing directly from the community what was important to them as residents. It was decided that a community survey was the most efficient and accurate way to ensure that resident voices were included in the planning process which, in turn, would focus the Board’s planning directly on the areas of greatest concern among the residents they represent.

A community survey was then commissioned with the following objectives:

- 1. Ensure that the Board’s strategic planning is synchronized with resident input**
- 2. Focus the Board’s strategic planning on the most salient areas of community interest**
- 3. Inform the allocation of the MHCS D’s limited resources**

Research Methodology

An 20-minute online survey was utilized to allow for greater content depth. A letter from the MHCSD was mailed to all households inviting them to take the survey online. Every effort was made to allow access to the greatest number of Mountain House residents. Computers were made available in the Mountain House library and at the MHCSD office, reminders were made on the MHCSD website, and the Mountain House Mothers Club was enlisted to deliver reminders door-to-door, eventually covering every street in the community.

The only criteria for completing the survey were being 18 years of age or older and a full-time resident of Mountain House. Multiple members of a single household were allowed to complete the survey. However, only “unique” households were utilized in the calculation of population figures, household salaries, and other household (rather than individual) measures. It should also be noted that residents were able to “opt-out” of all demographic questions in the survey.

The survey was active March 27 through April 20, 2008. The final number of completed interviews was 425 with 94% of these representing unique household perspectives. This coupled with the fairly “expected” distribution of completed interviews across villages and demographics, suggests a fairly high level of data representativeness.

Initial Summary Findings

- While the current recession is an ever-present caveat, most residents are satisfied with their decision to move to Mountain House, especially those who:
 - ...were initially motivated by the small town feel of Mountain House and the safe environment it provides.
 - ...purchased before prices skyrocketed (Wicklund Village) or just recently as prices fell.
 - Not surprisingly, the least satisfied are those who bought for an investment or were influenced in their decision by employers or family.
- Resident satisfaction with the MHCS D does show room for improvement and is interestingly lowest in Wicklund Village.
- Analysis shows that the aspects of Mountain House life that residents are most concerned with include:
 - all aspects of the information, or lack thereof, provided by the MHCS D
 - economic development and public transportation
 - safety, security and CC&Rs
 - various aspects of the community parks
 - overall community feel and the quality of the community events offered
 - street and traffic signal quality
- Residents feel the MHCS D is performing well on most of the items above, **except for the following:**
 - access to clear, thorough, and timely information
 - the enforcement of CC&Rs and the CC&Rs in general
 - public transportation
 - economic development
 - and the quality of the community events offered
- While scoring high on the spending allocation exercise, correlation analysis shows that more basic needs such as being better informed and having transportation options trump the desire to have more activities for kids and teenagers.
- Attendance at governmental activities (Board of Director meetings, etc.) and at community events shows a lack of resident participation.
- In attempting to improve communications, residents are split evenly between mail and e-mail preferences.
- Demographically, Mountain House residents are:
 - racially diverse, highly educated, and well-paid.
 - most-often from the San Francisco Bay Area and generally commuting back in that direction for work.
 - living in multi-member households and skewed toward households with children.

Initial Recommendations

- It appears that increased and improved communication from the MHCSO would hold great value.
 - Most residents appear to be aware of the economic challenges faced by the MHCSO. They just want to be kept informed of what does, or does not, develop or transpire and why.
 - Otherwise, they are forced to find their own sources for information and rumors – all of varying levels of accuracy
 - Event participation, and to a smaller degree government participation, would likely increase.
- Committees could be formed to better understand and address resident concerns around the following:
 - general CC&R concerns, and more specifically, CC&R enforcement
 - public transportation opportunities, both for work commuters and for those with the need to travel to neighboring communities
- If financially beneficial, consider cutting several community activities that are under-attended with no hope that near-future attendance would improve with greater, more timely event promotion. Instead, focus Mountain House's limited resources on a few, well-publicized events that build community spirit and/or attract potential buyers to the community.
- Every effort should be made to communicate specific opportunities for residents to contribute their highly-skilled backgrounds and abilities to community needs.
- Where fiscally practicable, focus the budget on the core motivators of Mountain House's most satisfied and involved residents: safety and a small-town community feel.

Mountain House Community Demographics (cont'd)

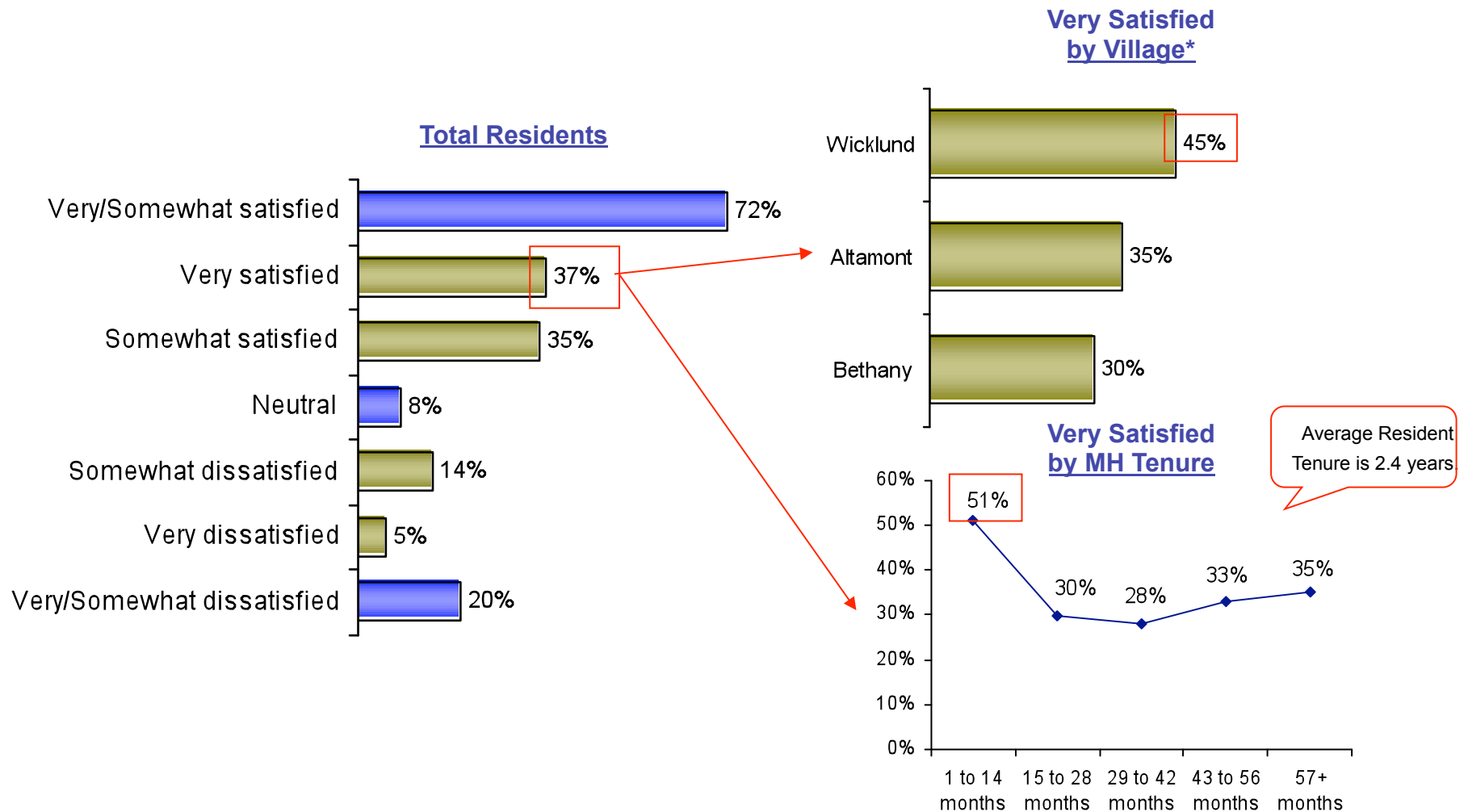
Education									
Less than high school		0%							
High school		9%							
Junior College or Technical School		14%							
College/University	78%	50%	{						
Master's		20%							
Doctoral		8%							
Employment Status									
Employed full-time	79%	65%	{						
Employed part-time		7%							
Self-employed		7%							
Retired		3%							
Temporarily unemployed		4%							
Full-time student		2%							
Not employed at all		13%							
Household Income*									
Under \$75,000		17%							
\$75,000-99,999		20%							
\$100,000-124,999	63%	23%	{						
\$125,000-149,999		16%							
\$150,000 or more		24%							
<i>Average</i>									
							\$	119,437	
Commuter Status of Those Working									
Work at-home									13%
Commute to work									87%
1-25 miles (one-way)									33%
26-50									38%
More than 50									28%
<i>Average distance (miles)</i>									39.3
Public Transportation Usage of Those Commuting									
Use public transportation									23%
BART									49%
Carpool									30%
ACE Train									18%
Bus									15%
Vanpool									5%
Ethnicity									
White/Caucasian									47%
Asian									30%
Hispanic									8%
African American									7%
Other									5%
Pacific Islander									3%
Language Spoken Most Often at Home*									
English									82%
Asian/Pacific Island									11%
Other									6%
Spanish									1%

	<u>White/Cau.</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Other</u>
Wicklund	59%	17%	24%
Bethany	42%	32%	26%
Altamont	42%	40%	18%

*These calculations were made with unique households so that multiple responses from the same household were not double counted.

Overall Mountain House Move Satisfaction

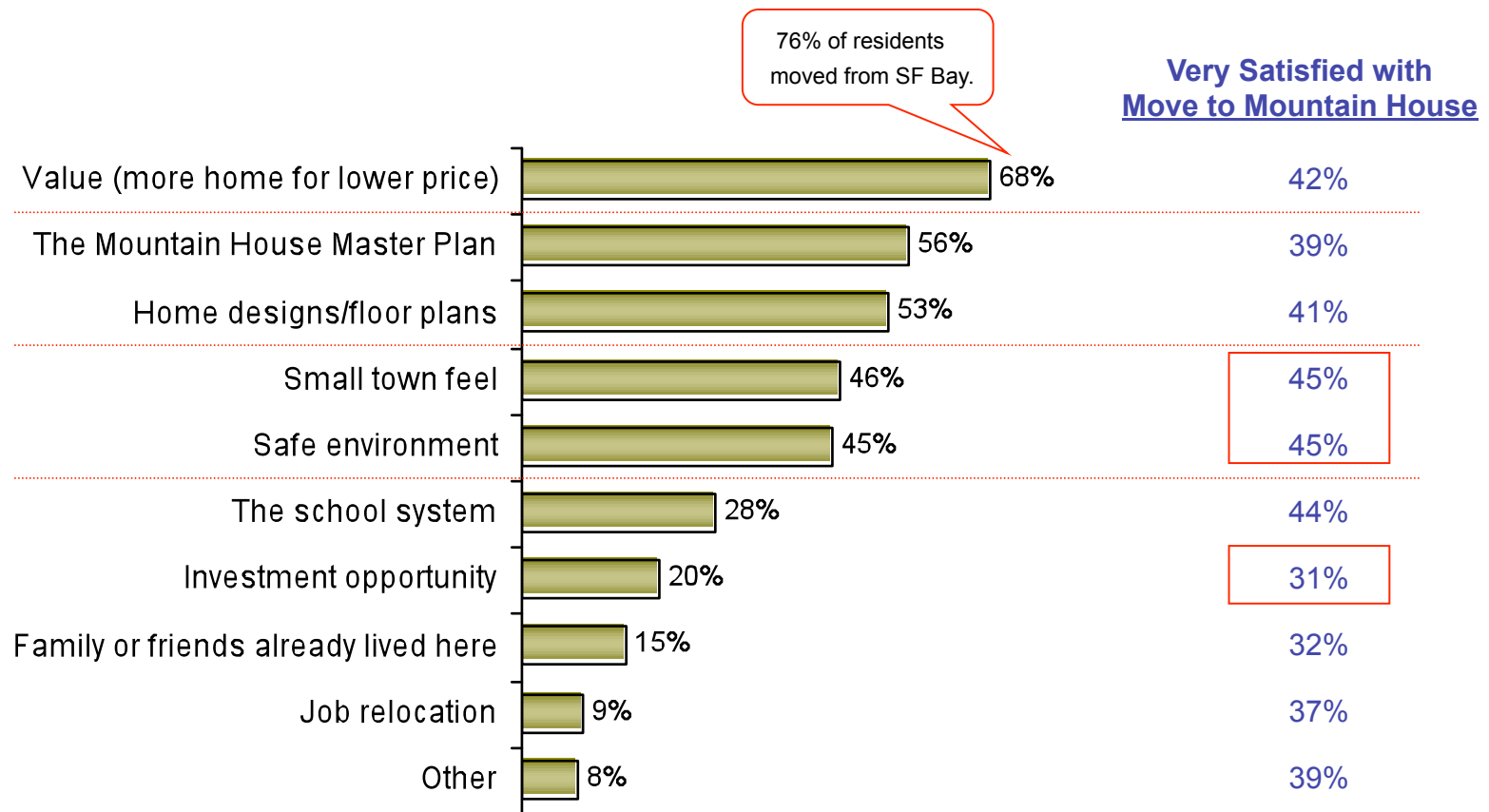
- Despite the current recession, roughly 70% of Mountain House residents are satisfied with their move decision.
- Given the focus on home values, Wicklund Village as a group is not surprisingly the most satisfied as they bought 4-5 years prior.
- Also, move satisfaction is highest within the shortest tenure group, decreasing dramatically by the second year in Mountain House.
- There are several potential explanations: possible home price/satisfaction correlation, greater expectations beyond a “good deal” as tenure increases, etc.



*Questa not listed due to very small base size.

Reasons for Mountain House Move and Resultant Satisfaction

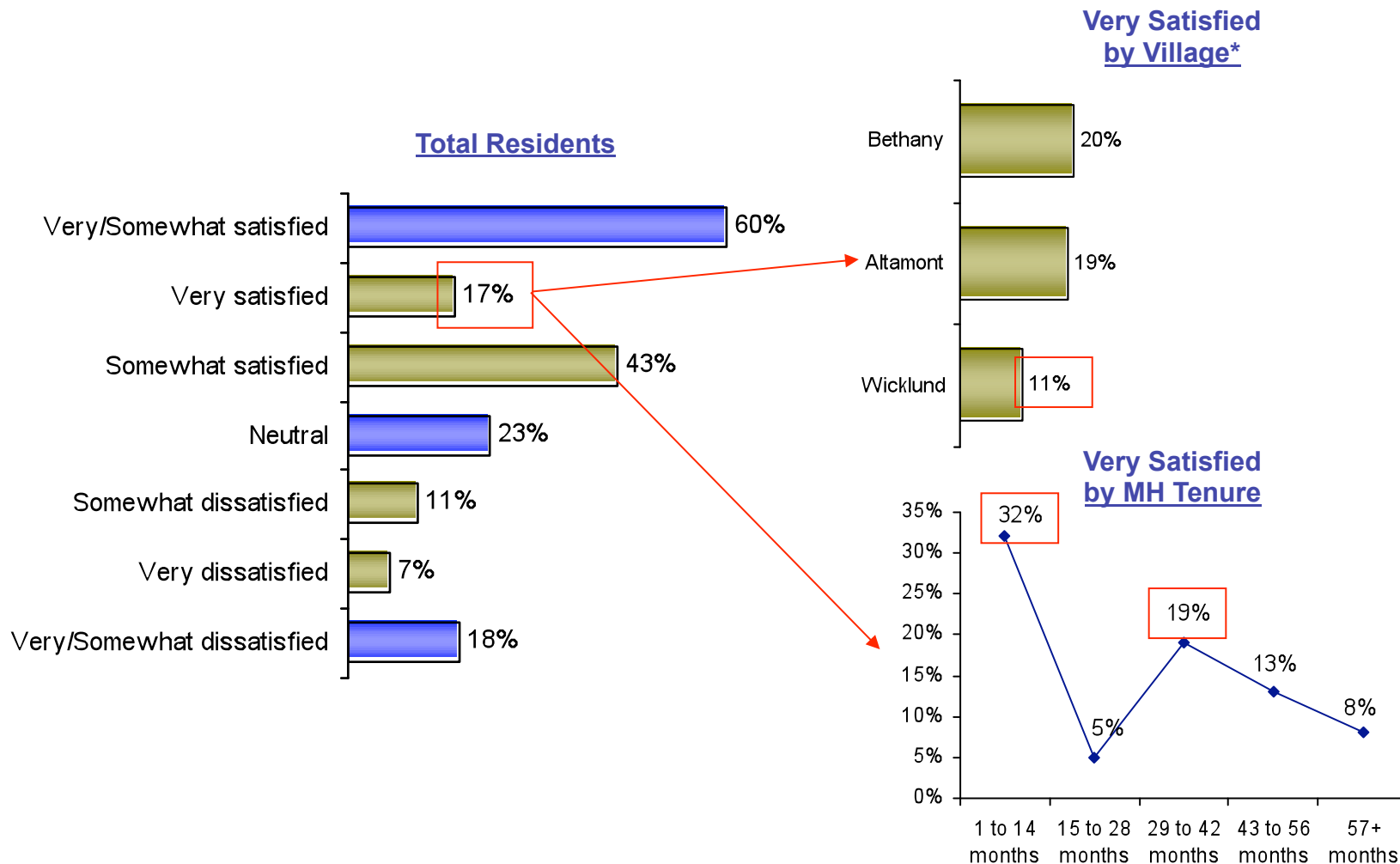
- Not surprisingly, the main reason for moving to Mountain House is value with most moving from the San Francisco Bay Area; moving their homes, but not their jobs, east.
- A second tier of residents moved to Mountain House as they were intrigued by the Master Plan and enjoyed the home designs and floor plans.
- However, the most satisfied residents are those who moved here because of the small town feel and safe environment.
- This is in stark contrast to “residents” who purchased in Mountain House as an investment opportunity.



Note: Satisfaction numbers are for those who selected at least the given reason. Residents were able to select multiple reasons.

Overall MHCSD Satisfaction

- Meanwhile, satisfaction with the MHCSD shows room for improvement with only 17% of residents very satisfied.
- Satisfaction is lowest in Wicklund Village which coincides with low MHCSD satisfaction among the longest tenured residents.
- The honeymoon effect is slightly different with the MHCSD. New residents begin fairly satisfied, and then their opinion falls off precipitously after just a year – likely due to the 15-28 month tenure group’s past 1-2 year economic context.
- Satisfaction then rebounds before decreasing again as tenure increases.

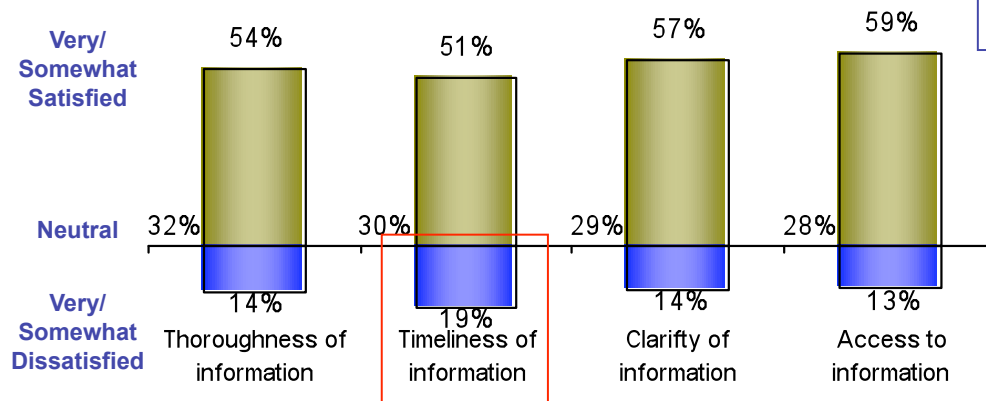


*Questa not listed due to very small base size.

Satisfaction With Information From MHCSD

- There is room for improvement in MHCSD communications with just better than half of residents currently satisfied.
- Information timeliness appears to be the biggest issue.
- E-mail and mail are the preferred receipt formats and those who prefer mail would most like to see MHCSD information incorporated in the existing newsletter.
- And, this information dissatisfaction does not appear related to language barriers as Wicklund Village, with the lowest percentage of non-Whites, gives the lowest ratings on all four information measures.

Satisfaction with Different Information Aspects



Least Satisfied Village on All Four MHCSD Information Measures:
Wicklund

Information Receipt Preferences

By E-mail	By Mail	By Visiting MHCSD Website	Attend Informational Meetings	Posted Hardcopies	Other
67%	67%	46%	20%	9%	2%

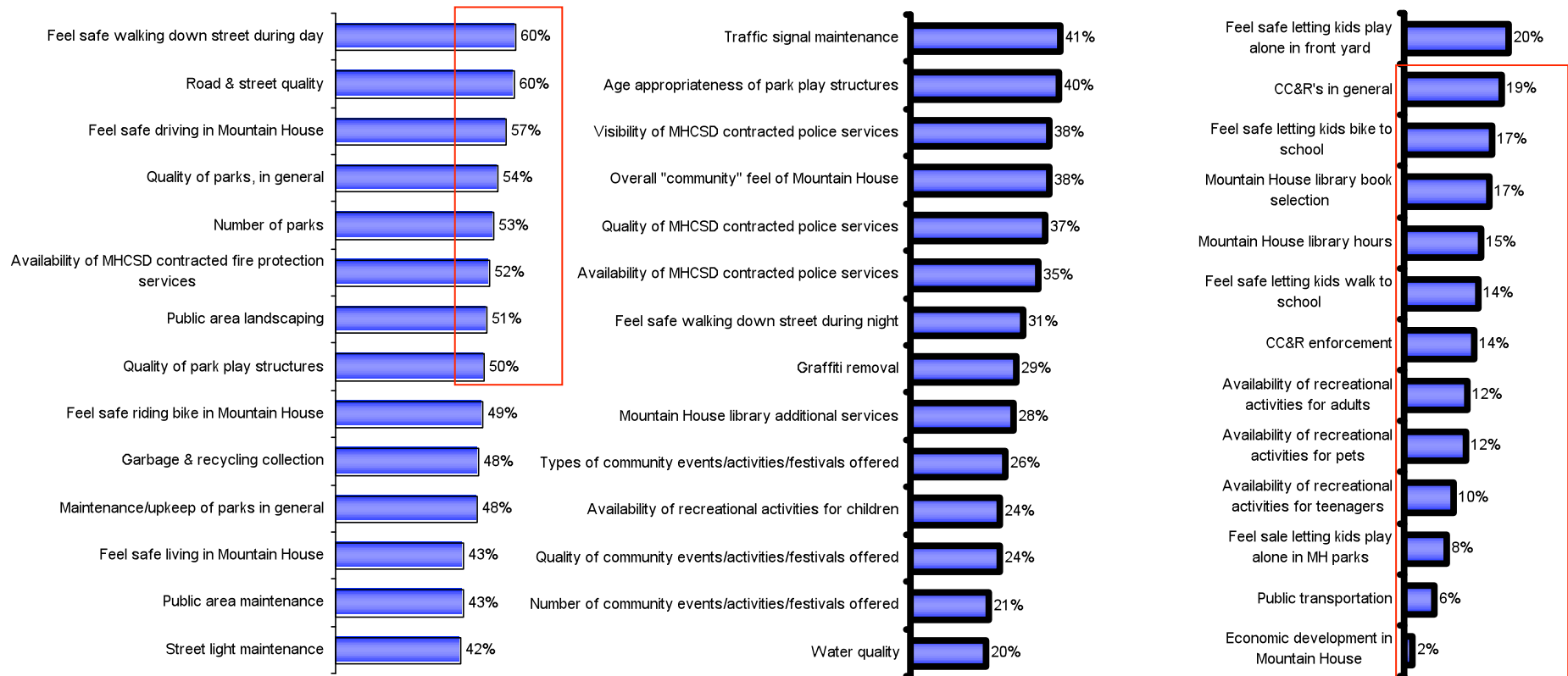
Preferred Mail Delivery Format (those preferring mail)

Part of Newsletter	Part of Utility Bill	Separate from Newsletter & Bill	Other
65%	41%	29%	2%

Satisfaction With MHCSD Services

- Residents are most satisfied with the MHCSD on several safety related measures, the quality and number of parks, road and street quality, and public area landscaping.
- However, safety issues related to kids receive low marks as do CC&R enforcement and in general, recreational activities, and at the bottom, public transportation.

Very Satisfied or Strongly Agree

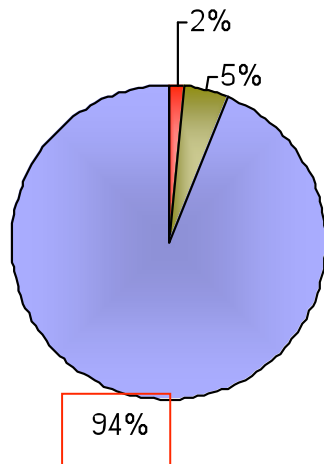


Note: Kid-focused measures such as "feel safe letting kids walk to school" were analyzed only among residents with children.

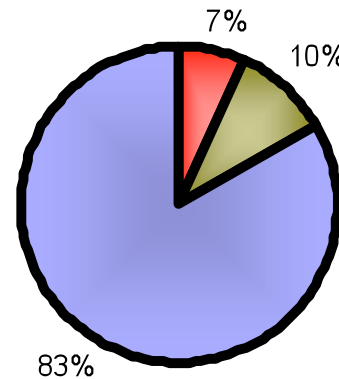
Community Involvement – Government Related

- While there are strong areas of resident dissatisfaction with the MHCS D, the residents themselves are not willing or able to participate in the change process.
- The MHCS D website is the extent of their involvement. Even so, 6 out of 10 residents seldom or never even use it.
- While an element of this dynamic is simply human nature, many of the residents express a desire to learn more about what is happening, and some even “say” they would get involved if they were more informed.
- How much of this stated desire will turn into actual behavior is unclear.

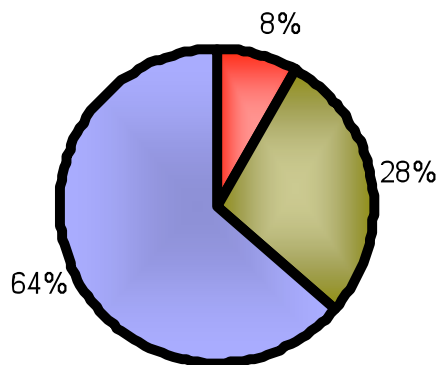
Attend Board of Director Meetings



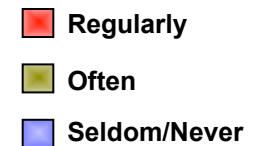
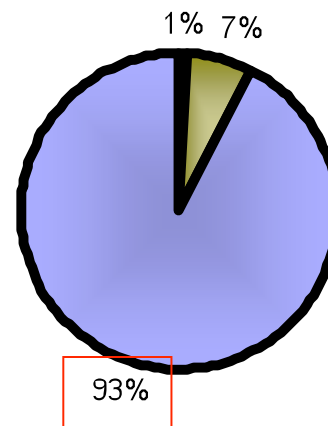
Attend Community Meetings



Visit the MHCS D Website



Make a Service Request on MHCS D Website

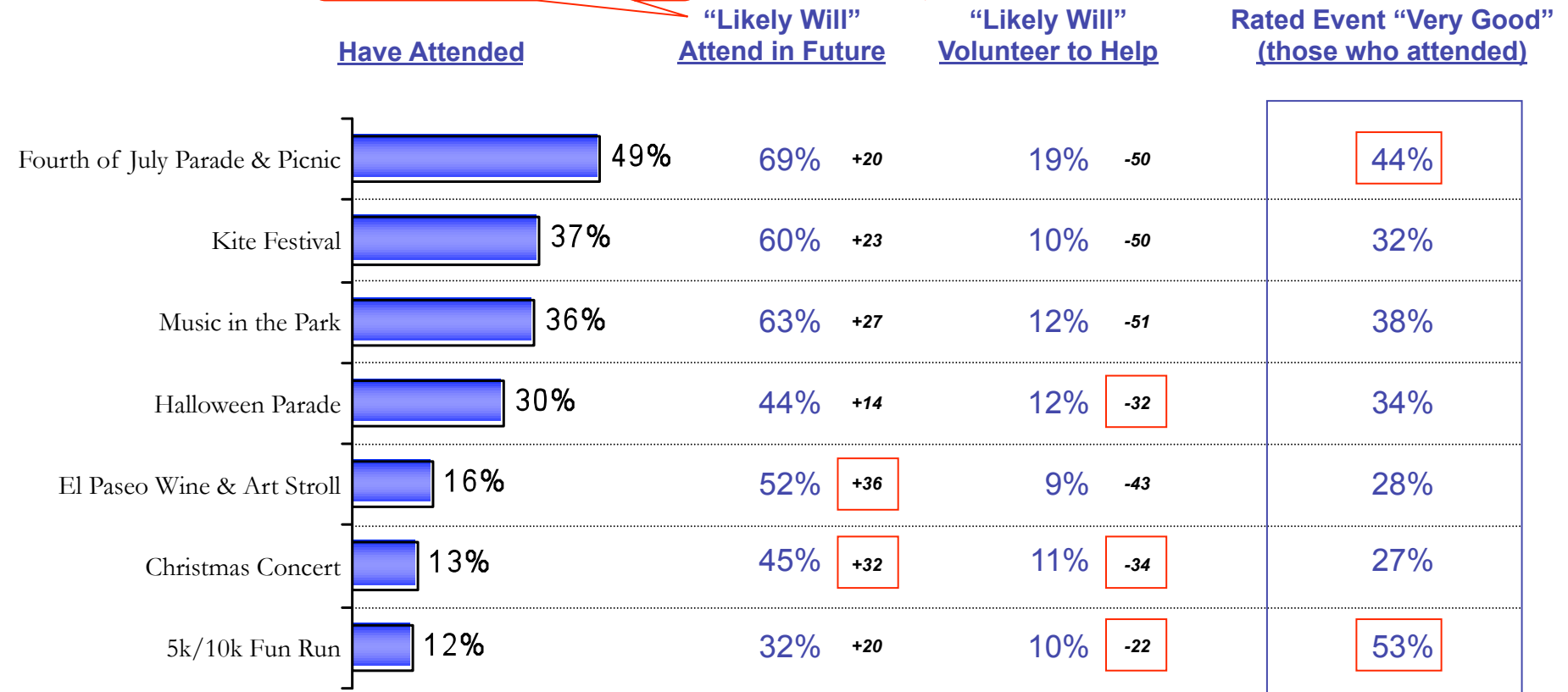


Community Involvement – Events, Activities, “Parks & Recreation”

- Several of the planned events are better attended than others, led by the Fourth of July Parade and Picnic.
- With regard to events and activities, it appears that additional information (in the form of this survey prompt) could increase the desire to attend in the future as there are large increases in the percentage who have attended to those who likely will in the future.
- Additional information/promotion does not have the same effect on volunteering at these events as likely will volunteer numbers are very low.
- The two highest rated events are also the most and the least attended – suggesting a necessary analysis of cost vs. benefit (existing resident satisfaction and/or new resident attraction).

“Likely Will” attend none of these 15%
 “Likely Will” attend only 1 of these 7%
 “Likely Will” attend 2 or more of these 78%

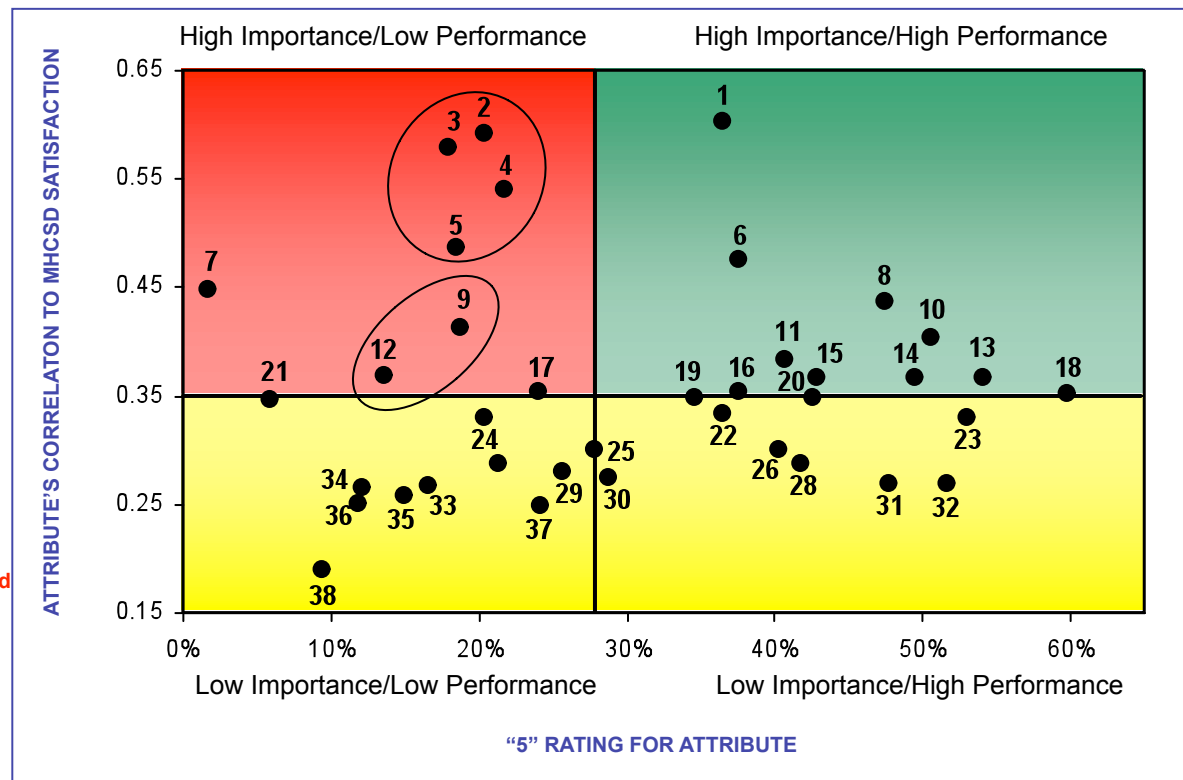
“Likely Will” volunteer at none of these 72%



Action Items Prioritized Against Satisfaction with MHCSD

- Keeping residents more informed is the most pressing matter in the near future. The CC&R's will also require some attention as will the MHCSD's influence on economic development and improvements in public transportation.
- Meanwhile, the MHCSD should maintain its performance on other items important to residents such as: community feel, maintenance and upkeep of the parks, public area landscaping, and various other public works.

- 1 Decision to move to Mountain House
- 2 Clarity of information from MHCSD
- 3 Thoroughness of information from MHCSD
- 4 Access to information from MHCSD
- 5 Timeliness of information from MHCSD
- 6 Overall "community" feel of Mountain House
- 7 Economic development in Mountain House
- 8 Maintenance/upkeep of parks in general
- 9 CC&Rs in general
- 10 Public area landscaping
- 11 Traffic signal maintenance
- 12 CC&R enforcement
- 13 Quality of parks, in general
- 14 Quality of park play structures
- 15 Feel safe living in Mountain House
- 16 Visibility of MHCSD contracted police services
- 17 Quality of community events/activities/festivals offered
- 18 Road and street quality
- 19 Availability of MHCSD contracted police services
- 20 Public area maintenance
- 21 Public transportation
- 22 Quality of MHCSD contracted police services
- 23 Number of parks
- 24 Water quality
- 25 Mountain House library additional services
- 26 Age appropriateness of park play structures
- 27 Number of community events/activities/festivals offered
- 28 Street light maintenance
- 29 Types of community events/activities/festivals offered
- 30 Graffiti removal
- 31 Garbage & recycling collection
- 32 Availability of MHCSD contracted fire protection
- 33 Mountain House library book selection
- 34 Availability of recreational activities for adults
- 35 Mountain House library hours
- 36 Availability of recreational activities for pets
- 37 Availability of recreational activities for children
- 38 Availability of recreational activities for teens



Note: Y-axis: The correlation between a given attribute (#1-38 above) and Satisfaction with the MHCSD
 X-axis: Percent who rated a "5" for the given attribute (#1-38 above)

Hypothetical Resident Budget Allocation (Median Spends)

- Given the choices below, residents would spend the most money on police services and children/teenager activities.
- However, other variables such as economic development or public transportation could take precedence if added to the list.
- Parents would spend more on children/teenager activities than non-parents who are more interested in adult activities.
- And, while CC&R enforcement is important to residents, they want to spend a relatively small amount to get this accomplished.

