

*Fairbank,
Maslin,
Maullin,
Metz &
Associates*

FM3

*Public Opinion Research
& Strategy*

TO: The City of Manhattan Beach

FROM: John Fairbank, Dave Metz, and Sharon Pinkerton

RE: DRAFT Key Findings from the Manhattan Beach Resident Survey

DATE: March 10, 2015

The following is a brief summary of key findings from the 2015 City of Manhattan Beach resident survey.¹

- **Manhattan Beach residents have a very positive opinion of Manhattan Beach as a place to live.** A nearly unanimous 97 percent believe the quality of life in Manhattan Beach is “excellent” (68%) or “good” (29%). And by more than a 4-to-1 margin, residents believe things in the City are headed in the right direction (with 68% giving this response) rather than off on the wrong track (16%).
- **Residents also give their local government high marks.** Nearly nine in ten residents (87%) are satisfied with the job the City of Manhattan Beach is doing to provide city services, with 53 percent “very” satisfied. When asked to rate 19 specific services provided by City government on a 10-point scale (where a “1” indicated they were not at all satisfied and “10” indicated they were very satisfied), all items received average ratings above 6.0, indicating residents are at least somewhat satisfied in all areas. Further, six in ten to two-thirds of respondents feel City government listens to residents, can be trusted with their tax dollars, and is open and accountable.
- **There is little intensity of concern about any issue in Manhattan Beach.** When asked to rate how serious they consider a number of issues, none were called “extremely serious” by more than two in ten residents. Moreover, less than half consider any issue serious overall.

¹ From February 6th through the 11th, 2015, Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) conducted a survey among 400 registered voters in the City of Manhattan Beach. The survey was conducted on both landlines and cellular phones. The margin of error is +/- 5.0 percentage points. The margin of error for split-sampled questions will be higher.

This low level of concern most likely stands behind the finding that seven in ten residents (70%) believe there is little to no need for additional funding to provide the level of city services that residents need and want.

- **Crime is the most salient and prominent concern among residents.** Nearly one in four (23%) volunteered crime in general or home break-ins or burglaries more specifically as the most important problem facing the City. Further, nearly half (48%) of residents believe *crime in general* has increased in the last few years. An even higher 59 percent believe *the amount of home burglaries* has increased—with 35 percent believing they have increased “a lot.” Just over half (52%) feel that *car break-ins and thefts* are on the rise, with three in ten (31%) believing they have increased “a lot.”
- **Despite concern about crime, a nearly unanimous 95 percent agree that *I personally feel safe living in Manhattan Beach.*** And while crime is a top concern, it is not an intense one. Just 31 percent call crime an “extremely” (14%) or “very” (17%) serious concern. This suggests that, although residents feel a greater threat from increasing crime, they continue to feel safe in Manhattan Beach despite it.
- **A lack of parking is another top concern for Manhattan Beach residents.** Nearly one in ten (9%) respondents volunteered a lack of parking as the most serious issue facing the City. When asked directly, *the availability of parking in downtown Manhattan Beach* was called “extremely” or “very” serious by the highest proportion of residents for any issue, with 42 percent giving this response. Moreover, a high seven in ten residents said there is a “great need” (35%) or “some need” (35%) for more parking downtown. Just 17 percent feel there is no real need.
- **Residents favor a number of proposals to improve parking Downtown,** including a shuttle service to bring people to Downtown (74% favor), increasing parking by building an underground parking lot as part of the Vons Grocery Store’s redevelopment (64%), providing a bike sharing program (62%), offering a shuttle between Manhattan Village Mall and Downtown (61%), and creating remote parking lots with a shuttle to Downtown (58%).
- **There is an undercurrent of concern about the loss of Manhattan Beach’s small town feel.** Thirty-five percent consider *the loss of Manhattan Beach’s small town feel* to be a serious concern and 37 percent feel this way about *the declining number of small retail stores in downtown Manhattan Beach*. As a result, 79 percent favor (with 51% strongly favoring) *limiting the size of stores in downtown Manhattan Beach to prevent an increase in large chain stores and protect the small town feel.*
- **When matched up against other issues, residents place the highest priority on public safety services. However, other high priorities include repairing the storm drain system (62% high priority), repairing and improving city streets, roads, and sidewalks (62%); and fixing broken or burnt out street lights (69%).** Residents place the lowest priority on updating and repairing community and recreation centers (22%), building a skate park (20%), and rebuilding the Manhattan Beach Boulevard fire station (19%).