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Research Objectives

- Assess resident perceptions and trend changes, if any, since 2005:
  - Quality of Life
  - Top Issues in the County
  - Satisfaction with County Services and Priorities for Improvement
  - County Expenditure of Taxpayer Dollars
  - Current Use of County Services
  - Ratings of Customer Service
  - County Communication with Residents
  - County Information Sources

- Gather resident opinions on service priorities in light of limited and declining County resources
Methodology Overview

- **Data Collection**: Telephone Interviewing
- **Universe**: 199,600 Adult residents of Marin County
- **Fielding Dates**: March 3 to 10, 2009
- **Interview Length**: 16 minutes
- **Sample Size**: 750 (150 in each of the five Supervisorial Districts)
- **Margin of Error**: ± 3.6%
Key Findings

- Total satisfaction with quality of life at 90%; 55% rated “Staying the same”
  - Significant increase in “Very Satisfied” at 65% (up from 60% in 2007)
  - Significant decrease in “Somewhat Satisfied” at 25% (down from 32% in 2007)

- Traffic congestion and concerns around the economic downturn were the top two top-of-mind issues facing county residents
  - Though traffic congestion remains a top concern, it was cited by significantly fewer respondents, with 26% mentions (down from 48% in 2007 and 44% in 2005)
  - Unemployment and the economy account for 20% mentions
  - Affordable housing became relatively less of a top-of-mind issue, with 10% mentions (down from 21% in 2007 and 20% in 2005)

- Total satisfaction with County performance at 86%; again, there was significant increase in those “Very Satisfied” (48%)
  - Total satisfaction was at 87% in 2007 and 83% in 2005
  - “Very Satisfied” was at 43% in 2007 and 37% in 2005

- 74% “Excellent” or “Good” customer service ratings; unchanged since 2005

- Room for improvement in communication with County residents; unchanged from 2007
  - 40% “Fair,” 18% “Poor” and 7% “Very Poor” ratings
Four areas emerged as priorities for improvements (relatively high derived importance and low satisfaction):
  - Increasing availability of local jobs (also in 2007)
  - Providing building and planning permits (also in 2007)
  - Providing mental health services
  - Maintaining County bus systems
  - Reducing homelessness (also in 2007), and maintaining County roads and streets emerged as border-line priorities for improvement

With limited and declining resources, residents wanted to see most County services and programs at least maintained
  - Especially with increasing availability of local jobs (51% expand; 34% maintain; 8% reduce or eliminate)
  - Relatively lower priorities include:
    - Providing local arts, cultural events and facilities (58% maintain or expand; 40% reduce or eliminate)
    - Acquiring, restoring, and maintaining additional open space (65% maintain or expand; 34% reduce or eliminate)
    - Providing bicycling and pedestrian paths (61% maintain or expand; 37% reduce or eliminate)
2. Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the overall quality of life in the County of Marin? Is that very or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?

- Very Satisfied: 65%
- Somewhat Satisfied: 25%
- Total Satisfaction: 90%
- Very Dissatisfied: 2%
- Somewhat Dissatisfied: 5%
- DK/NA: 2%
3. Overall, would you say the quality of life in the County of Marin is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

- Getting Better: 9%
- Getting Worse: 31%
- Staying the Same: 55%
- DK/NA: 6%
4. What do you feel are the two biggest issues facing your community?

- Traffic congestion: 26%
- Quality of education: 12%
- Inadequate public transportation: 11%
- Unemployment: 10%
- Economy: 10%
- Lack of affordable housing: 10%
- High cost of living: 8%
- Bad infrastructure: 6%
- Water shortage: 6%
- Excessive growth/development: 5%
- Crime rate, drugs and alcoholism: 5%
- Pollution/Environmental issues: 5%
- DK/NA: 5%

Note: “Other” responses mentioned by fewer than 5 percent of the respondents are not shown in this chart. The above issues have been abbreviated for charting purposes; for the exact wording, please see the Topline report.
Satisfaction with County Performance in Providing Services

5. Thinking of the services and programs that the County offers, and not services you might receive from your city or town, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the County of Marin’s performance in providing these services? Is that very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?
6. Now I'm going to read a list of services and programs that are provided by County government, some of which are mandated by federal and state laws. For each one, please tell me if you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the County’s performance in providing that program or service to residents.

- Conducting elections
- Preventing wildfires
- Providing law enforcement services
- Local arts & cultural events/facilities
- Maintaining County library services
- Maintaining County park facilities
- Preparing for/responding to emergencies
- Acq/restore/maintain add'l open space
- Protecting agricultural land
- Restoring watershed areas
- Providing services for seniors

Note: The above rating questions have been abbreviated for charting purposes; for the exact wording, please see the Topline report. Computation of mean scores: “Very Satisfied” = +2, “Somewhat Satisfied” = +1, “Somewhat Dissatisfied” = -1, and “Very Dissatisfied” = -2.
6. Now I’m going to read a list of services and programs that are provided by County government, some of which are mandated by federal and state laws. For each one, please tell me if you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the County’s performance in providing that program or service to residents.

- Providing bicycling and pedestrian paths
- Providing specialized transit services for seniors
- Supporting local businesses and industries
- Providing drug and alcohol abuse programs
- Reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions
- Maintaining storm drains and channels
- Maintaining county bus systems
- Maintaining county roads and streets
- Providing mental health services
- Providing health services for low-income residents
- Providing building and planning permits*
- Reducing homelessness in the County
- Increasing the availability of local jobs
- Increasing the amount of affordable housing

Note: *Asked to 261 Unincorporated residents only. The above rating questions have been abbreviated for charting purposes; for the exact wording, please see the Topline report. Computation of mean scores: “Very Satisfied” = +2, “Somewhat Satisfied” = +1, “Somewhat Dissatisfied” = -1, and “Very Dissatisfied” = -2.
Importance-Satisfaction Matrix

A. Supporting local businesses/industries
B. Increasing local job availability
C. Acquiring, restoring and maintaining additional open space
D. Restoring watershed areas
E. Maintaining county bus systems
F. Providing bicycling and pedestrian paths
G. Providing specialized transit services for seniors and disabled
H. Maintaining county roads and streets
I. Providing health services for low-income residents
J. Providing drug and alcohol abuse programs
K. Providing services for seniors
L. Providing mental health services
M. Increasing the amount of affordable housing
N. Preventing wildfires
O. Providing law enforcement services
P. Maintaining storm drains and channels for flood control
Q. Providing local arts and cultural events and facilities
R. Maintaining county library services
S. Maintaining facilities at county parks
T. Protecting agricultural land
U. Conducting elections
V. Reducing homelessness
W. Reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions
X. Preparing for and responding to major emergencies and disaster management
Y. Providing building and planning permits
7. With declining resources, the County will have to prioritize services to residents and possibly reduce or eliminate certain services. I’m going to read you a list of these services. For each, please tell me if this is a service that can be reduced or eliminated, of if current service levels must be maintained or even expanded.

- Increasing availability of local jobs
- Maintaining storm drains and channels
- Providing health services for low-income residents
- Preparing for and responding to major emergencies
- Maintaining county bus systems
- Preventing wildfires
- Maintaining county roads and streets
- Supporting local businesses and industries
- Providing services for seniors
- Providing mental health services
- Providing specialized transit services
- Reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions
- Increasing the amount of affordable housing

Note: The above rating questions have been abbreviated for charting purposes; for the exact wording, please see the Topline report. Computation of mean scores: “Eliminate” = 0, “Reduce” = +1, “Maintain” = +2, and “Expand” = +3.
7. With declining resources, the County will have to prioritize services to residents and possibly reduce or eliminate certain services. I’m going to read you a list of these services. For each, please tell me if this is a service that can be reduced or eliminated, or if current service levels must be maintained or even expanded.

- Providing law enforcement services: 2.0
- Reducing homelessness: 2.0
- Maintaining County library services: 2.0
- Restoring watershed areas: 2.0
- Providing drug and alcohol abuse programs: 1.9
- Providing building and planning permits*: 1.9
- Protecting agricultural land: 1.9
- Conducting elections: 1.9
- Maintaining facilities at County parks: 1.7
- Providing bicycling and pedestrian paths: 1.7
- Acquiring/restoring/maintaining additional open space: 1.6
- Providing local arts, cultural events and facilities: 1.6

Note: *Asked to 261 Unincorporated residents only. The above rating questions have been abbreviated for charting purposes; for the exact wording, please see the Topline report. Computation of mean scores: “Eliminate” = 0, “Reduce” = +1, “Maintain” = +2, and “Expand” = +3.
8. How well is the County doing in spending taxpayer dollars on the right priorities for services to residents? Would you say excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor?

- Excellent: 5%
- Good: 39%
- Fair: 32%
- Poor: 8%
- Very Poor: 5%
- DK/NA: 11%
9. What County services or programs are you or someone in your household currently using or have used in the past year?

- County Library: 47%
- County parks & open space: 40%
- County streets and roads: 25%
- Bicycling pathways: 12%
- Recreation programs: 11%
- Health services: 10%
- Arts and cultural events: 10%
- Elections/polling services: 10%
- Pedestrian pathways: 9%
- Public transportation: 8%
- Fire/paramedic services: 8%
- Public defender services: 4%
- Other: 5%
- None/DK/NA: 22%

Note: “Other” responses mentioned by fewer than 4 percent of the respondents are not shown in this chart. The above services or programs have been abbreviated for charting purposes; for the exact wording, please see the Topline report.
10. How would you rate the level of customer service for the County services or programs that you or somebody in your household are currently using or have used in the past year? Would you say this customer service was excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor?

- Excellent: 28%
- Good: 46%
- Fair: 16%
- Poor: 2%
- Very Poor: 2%
- DK/NA: 6%

(n = 583)
11. Overall, how well does the County provide information to residents about priorities, programs and services? Would you say they are doing an excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor job?
12. From what sources do you get information on County government?

- Marin Independent Journal: 41%
- County website: 15%
- Internet: 9%
- San Francisco Chronicle: 9%
- Local TV station: 8%
- Neighbors (word-of-mouth): 6%
- The Pacific Sun: 6%
- News Pointer: 5%
- None of the above: 6%
- Other: 27%
- DK/NA: 3%

Note: “Other” responses mentioned by fewer than 4 percent of the respondents are not shown in this chart.
Next Steps

- Communicate the results to the County organization and community
- Offer an online version of the survey to gather additional resident feedback beyond the statistically-valid, representative telephone survey
- Analyze the results to further identify key trends and findings
- Drill down on specific questions during future community forums to get further information about community perceptions
- Use results to inform the budget process for FY 2009-10 as well as the County’s long-term restructuring process