



**MOUNTLAKE  
TERRACE**

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# The City of Mountlake Terrace, Washington

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## Summary Report 2008



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# SURVEY BACKGROUND

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## About The National Citizen Survey™

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The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS™) is a collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

## Understanding the Results

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### Survey Administration

Following the mailing of a pre-survey notification postcard to a random sample of 1,200 households, surveys were mailed to the same residences approximately one week later. A reminder letter and a new survey were sent to the same households after two weeks. Of the mailed postcards, 72 were undeliverable due to vacant or “not found” addresses. Completed surveys were received from 257 residents, for a response rate of 23%. Typically, the response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 20% to 40%.

It is customary to describe the precision of estimates made from surveys by a “level of confidence” (or margin of error). The 95 percent confidence level for this survey of 257 residents is generally no greater than plus or minus 6 percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample.

The results were weighted to reflect the demographic profile of all residents in the City of Mountlake Terrace. (For more information on the survey methodology, see Appendix B in the Report of Results. A copy of the survey materials can be found in Appendix C of the Report of Results.)

### Use of the “Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor” Response Scale

The scale on which respondents are asked to record their opinions about service and community quality is “excellent,” “good,” “fair” or “poor” (EGFP). While symmetrical scales often are the right choice in other measurement tasks, we have found that ratings of almost every local government service in almost every jurisdiction tend, on average, to be positive (that is, above the scale midpoint). Therefore, to permit finer distinctions among positively rated services, EGFP offers three options across which to spread those ratings. EGFP is more neutral because it requires no positive statement of service quality to judge (as agree-disagree scales require) and, finally, EGFP intends to measure absolute quality of service delivery or community quality (unlike satisfaction scales which ignore residents’ perceptions of quality in favor of their report on the acceptability of the level of service offered).

## Putting Evaluations onto a 100-Point Scale

Although responses to many of the evaluative questions were made on a 4 point scale with 1 representing the best rating and 4 the worst, many of the results in this summary are reported on a common scale where 0 is the worst possible rating and 100 is the best possible rating. If everyone reported “excellent,” then the result would be 100 on the 100-point scale. Likewise, if all respondents gave a “poor” rating, the result would be 0 on the 100-point scale. If the average rating for quality of life was “good,” then the result would be 67 on a 100-point scale; “fair” would be 33 on the 100-point scale. The 95 percent confidence interval around an average score on the 100-point scale is no greater than plus or minus 3 points based on all respondents.

# PROFILE OF MOUNTLAKE TERRACE

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As assessed by the survey, about 19% of Mountlake Terrace residents have lived in the community for more than 20 years and 60% are over age 34. Another 12% are over age 64. Seventy-nine percent are currently employed; 40% rent; 60% own and 48% live in detached single family homes. Over 86% of Mountlake Terrace residents have at least some college and 57% have annual household incomes above \$50,000. Six percent of Mountlake Terrace residents reported that they are Spanish, Hispanic or Latino and 86% said they are White or Caucasian.

## COMMUNITY LIFE

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The National Citizen Survey™ contained many questions related to the life of residents in the community. Survey participants were asked to rate their overall quality of life, as well as other aspects of quality of life in Mountlake Terrace. They also evaluated characteristics of the community, and gave their perceptions of safety in the City of Mountlake Terrace. The questionnaire assessed use of the amenities of the community and involvement by respondents in the civic and economic life of Mountlake Terrace.

### Quality of Life

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When asked to rate the overall quality of life in Mountlake Terrace, 10% of respondents thought it was “excellent.” Only 2% rated overall quality of life as “poor.” Mountlake Terrace as a place to raise children received an average rating of 58 on a 100-point scale.

### Ratings of Community Characteristics

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The highest rated characteristics of Mountlake Terrace were openness and acceptance of people of diverse backgrounds, recreation opportunities, and sense of community. When asked about potential problems in Mountlake Terrace, the three concerns rated by the highest proportion of respondents as a “major problem” were run down buildings, weed lots, or junk vehicles; drugs; and unsupervised youth. The rate of population growth in Mountlake Terrace was viewed as “too fast” by 33% of respondents, while 6% thought it was “too slow.”

### Perceptions of Safety

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When evaluating safety in the community, 68% of respondents felt “somewhat” or “very safe” from violent crimes in Mountlake Terrace. In their neighborhood after dark, 62% of survey participants felt “somewhat” or “very safe.”

As assessed by the survey, 16% of households reported that at least one member had been the victim of one or more crimes in the past year. Of those who had been the victim of a crime, 81% had reported it to police.

### Community Participation

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Participation in the civic, social and economic life of Mountlake Terrace during the past year was assessed on the survey. Among those completing the questionnaire, 23% reported volunteering in the past year.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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Several aspects of the government of the City of Mountlake Terrace were evaluated by residents completing The National Citizen Survey™. They were asked how much trust they placed in their local government, and what they felt about the services they receive from the City of Mountlake Terrace. Those who had any contact with a City of Mountlake Terrace employee in the past year gave their impressions of the most recent encounter.

### Public Trust

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When asked to evaluate whether they were pleased with the overall direction taken by the City of Mountlake Terrace, residents gave an average rating of 62 on a 100-point scale.

### Service Provided by Mountlake Terrace

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The overall quality of services provided by the City of Mountlake Terrace was rated as 58 on a 100-point scale.

### The City of Mountlake Terrace Employees

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Impressions of the City of Mountlake Terrace employees were assessed on the questionnaire. Those who had been in contact with a City of Mountlake Terrace employee in the past year (47%) rated their overall impression as 73 on a 100-point scale.

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Three additional questions were asked by the City of Mountlake Terrace as listed below. The results for these questions are also available in the Report of Results.

### Policy Question #1

<b>The City is considering building a new Civic Center that would include a City Hall and which may also include a Community/Senior Center and/or a Police Station. Please indicate the degree to which you support or oppose each of the following options:</b>	<b>The City building a new Civic Center facility with a City Hall</b>	<b>Adding a Community/Senior Center to the Civic Center</b>	<b>Adding a Police Station to the Civic Center</b>
Strongly support	36%	43%	37%
Somewhat support	41%	42%	43%
Somewhat oppose	11%	8%	9%
Strongly oppose	12%	7%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

### Policy Question #2

<b>How likely or unlikely are you to vote for a bond to pay for the new Civic Center facility for each of the following options?</b>	<b>The City building a new Civic Center facility with a City Hall</b>	<b>Adding a Community/Senior Center to the Civic Center</b>	<b>Adding a Police Station to the Civic Center</b>
Very likely	28%	29%	28%
Somewhat likely	36%	38%	37%
Somewhat unlikely	15%	17%	18%
Very unlikely	21%	16%	18%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

**Policy Question #3**

**Economic Development refers to the process of improving the quality of life for a community by creating and/or retaining jobs, services, and supporting or growing incomes and the tax base. How important, if at all, are each of the following areas for the City's economic development efforts?**

	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Somewhat important</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Total</b>
Encourage businesses to relocate and/or expand their business within the City limits	35%	39%	20%	6%	100%
Encourage more jobs	32%	45%	18%	4%	100%
Help existing businesses	40%	41%	16%	2%	100%
Improve infrastructure	38%	38%	22%	2%	100%
Improve the City's image	44%	31%	21%	4%	100%
Increase the tax base for City services	17%	33%	35%	15%	100%

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.