



## September 30, 2025 Township Board Listening Session

### SUMMARY

Since 2022, the Meridian Township Board has established a goal to enhance communication and outreach to the Township's nearly 45,000 residents. To help meet this goal, the Board scheduled three Listening Sessions in 2025:

- **Tuesday, June 10**
  - 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm at Central Park Pavilion (5151 Marsh Road, Okemos)
- **Tuesday, September 30**
  - 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm at St. Luke Lutheran Church (5589 Van Atta Road, Haslett)
- **Thursday, November 13**
  - 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm at 2|42 Community Center (2630 Bennett Road, Okemos)

After each listening session, staff provide a written summary with information about what was discussed. If a resident is not able to attend a session, they can provide questions or feedback online at <https://bit.ly/ListeningSessionsForm>.

The September 30, 2025 Listening Session was attended by over 50 individuals. The Listening Session commenced just after 6:00 pm with a welcome from Township Supervisor Hendrickson, and introducing the Township Board: Clerk Angela Demas and Trustees Nickolas Lentz, Kathy Ann Sundland, Peter Trezise, and Marna Wilson.

Township Staff in attendance included Township Manager Tim Dempsey, Deputy Township Manager and Director of Public Works Dan Opsommer, Police Chief Rick Grillo, Director of Community Planning and Development Tim Schmitt, Director of Parks and Recreation Courtney Wisinski, Director of Information Technology Stephen Gebes, Communication Manager Samantha Diehl, and Executive Assistant Michelle Prinz.

Staff then provided brief updates on the following topics:

- Senior Center, Haslett Village Square and Village of Okemos updates from Community Planning and Development Director Tim Schmitt
- 2025 Local Road Program, Pathways, and Pedestrian Safety updates from Deputy Township Manager Dan Opsommer

After those updates, the Supervisor opened the floor to the general public to ask questions. Questions were submitted electronically prior to the meeting, as well as written submissions at the meeting. Additionally, the Township Board stayed beyond the official end time of 7:30 pm to continue answering questions from constituents. A summary of the topics covered follows. Please note that not all questions are listed individually, as some are incorporated in staff updates or overlap with similar questions.

## **SENIOR CENTER**

STAFF UPDATE: With voters not supporting the Community and Senior Center millages, staff are now exploring existing buildings in the township, between 9,000–10,000 square feet, for a Senior Center only facility. The \$5 million State of Michigan grant must be used for this project by September 30, 2026, limiting options to expend funds in a timely manner. Staff will be providing a more detailed update at the Township Board meeting on Tuesday, October 21.

### ***Why doesn't the Township put the Senior Center in the Meridian Mall or other vacant retail space?***

Staff have assessed the availability of various commercial spaces throughout the Township, including the former Foods for Living and Meridian Mall. However, state funding mandates a lease period equivalent to ownership—50 years or more—which is cost-prohibitive at current market rates. The mall also presents additional challenges, including common area fees, challenges with direct access to spaces, and parking complications. There are also several vacant retail spaces in the Township that are under contract and not available (see *other development projects* below).

## **HASLETT VILLAGE SQUARE**

STAFF UPDATE: This is the redevelopment project at the southwest corner of Haslett and Marsh Roads. The developers have received Township approval for their site plan and brownfield plan. They are currently in the process of securing state approval for their brownfield plan. We expect site work to begin by the end of the year.

### ***What is in the Haslett Village Square development?***

This development will feature a mixture of residential and commercial spaces. Of the total commercial space, 9,000 square feet will be within the existing building on site, while a new 14,000 square-foot structure will provide additional retail space. There will also be a rotating food truck area. The residential components will include 115 apartments in five multi-family buildings and 84 for-sale townhomes in 14 buildings.

More information can be found at <https://www.meridian.mi.us/businesses/development-projects/haslett-village-square-concept-2-project>.

## **VILLAGE OF OKEMOS**

STAFF UPDATE: The Village of Okemos developers are re-evaluating the project and working with the Township to explore funding and infrastructure grants, including road reconstruction. Increased construction costs in a post-COVID environment have made a financially feasible project very challenging. When the west side of Okemos Road is redeveloped, the Ingham County Road Department will require the road to be widened to include a left turn lane. The Township is working with the Ingham County Road Department, Ingham County Drain Commission, and Consumers Energy to determine a viable path forward.

More information can be found at <https://www.meridian.mi.us/businesses/development-projects/village-of-okemos-project>.

## **OTHER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

### ***What other developments are occurring in the Township?***

- A bank is looking at the Old Chicago site.
- The former Outback Steakhouse will be demolished for a Mister Car Wash.
- The former Wheat Jewelers building will be demolished for a Panda Express.
- The former Haslett Library is not proposed for redevelopment, it is being used as a storage facility for the Township.

### ***How much tax revenue will the Grand Reserve generate?***

The Grand Reserve will generate approximately \$200,000–\$225,000 in annual tax revenue to the Township when completed. Total tax revenue to all jurisdictions, i.e., local schools, Ingham County, Airport Authority, CATA, etc., is estimated to be around \$1,000,000 per year. As the project is not yet completed, its projected 2026 assessment is at approximately 50% of the final value. All property values are set December 31 for the following tax year and revised according to project completion.

### ***What is the rezoning process for the Central Park Authentix Project?***

The project is subject to a consent judgement that was amended multiple times. The Planning Commission will be reviewing the project at their October 13 and 27 meetings, and possibly in November. The project will then be discussed by the Township Board in November.

There are many variables that the Board will consider when the project comes to them for consideration, including environmental impacts, traffic impacts, and more. Those conversations will occur throughout the process, and the Board welcomes input from residents on this matter.

Residents who want their comments included in the Board packet as part of the official record can email them to [board@meridian.mi.us](mailto:board@meridian.mi.us). Residents who do not want their comments included in the Board packet can email [townshipboard@meridian.mi.us](mailto:townshipboard@meridian.mi.us).

## **LOCAL ROADS PROGRAM**

UPDATE: The 2025 local road program is wrapping up for the year. Repaving projects have been completed in Everett Farms, Tacoma Hills, Lac du Mont, and along Tihart and Newman Roads. Remaining restoration work should be completed by the end of October or early November. Planning for the 2026 road program is currently underway and will be announced in early 2026.

### ***When will the potholes on Piper Road be fixed?***

Piper Road is on the Local Road Program list for 2027, but we must wait until after the 2026 roads are completed to determine if there will be adequate funding remaining.

### ***Why does the Township utilize “loose stones” in paving, known as chip and fog seal?***

Chip seals are used by the Ingham County Road Department on County primary and collector roads to extend the use life of roads in fair to excellent condition and to protect the investment being made by taxpayers. Chip seals accomplish this by creating a wearing course on top of the asphalt that protects the underlying asphalt from the harmful effects of storm water and sunlight. During construction, the loose stone can be inconvenient, but the excess/loose stone is swept off the road and a fog sealant is applied to seal the stone in place at the conclusion of the construction process. When the Ingham County Road Department’s public works crews perform a chip seal treatment to a roadway, they post 35 mph construction speed limits and loose stone signage. All motorists are reminded to respect the posted construction speed limits. The Township does not use chip seals on neighborhood roads.

## **PATHWAYS AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE**

UPDATE: The pathway segment along Newton Road Park and Lake Lansing Road has been completed and closes a significant gap in the network. The pathway along Bennett Road near the Schultz Veterinary clinic is under construction and will be completed this fall. This pathway includes an extensive boardwalk along the wetland area. Planning and design work for Phase III of the MSU to Lake Lansing trail is also underway. This project will extend the existing Inter Urban pathway west of Marsh Road, eastward to Lake Lansing Park. For the time being, it will utilize existing sidewalks/pathways along the Marsh and Haslett Roads intersection, with the long-term goal of providing access under the Marsh Road railroad overpass.

### ***Who is responsible for street lighting?***

Streetlight maintenance is typically the responsibility of Consumers Energy. If residents wish to report an outage, they can do so through the online [Consumers Energy outage reporting tool](#). New streetlights in a neighborhood are funded through special assessment districts (SAD). There is a defined process to create a SAD upon request of the neighborhood. Residents can submit any questions on creating a SAD to the Township's Department of Public Works at [dpw@meridian.mi.us](mailto:dpw@meridian.mi.us).

### ***Are all water meters switched out?***

Of the 15,700 water meters in Meridian Township, approximately 300 are currently not transmitting readings to the Township. Water department staff are working to schedule these replacements. If you receive a \$24 water bill, please contact Utility Billing to schedule an appointment for a replacement meter. The \$24 is the ready-to-serve fee and does not include water consumption, which would indicate a failed meter.

For questions, please contact Utility Billing at [UtilityBilling@meridian.mi.us](mailto:UtilityBilling@meridian.mi.us) or 517.853.4120.

## **TRAFFIC SAFETY**

### ***What is the Township doing to address speeding and traffic safety?***

The most common public safety issue expressed by Meridian Township residents is traffic safety. With increased staffing, the Meridian Township Police Department (MTPD) has tripled its traffic citations, rising from 753 in 2023 to 2,826 year to date in 2025. This increase corresponds with a higher number of traffic stops and the assignment of a full-time traffic enforcement officer. The MTPD also deploys electronic speed signs and uses traffic count tools, supporting a data-driven approach to enforcement. Residents noticing recurring traffic safety issues are encouraged to utilize the Traffic Concern Form on the [Police Department website](#).

Information was also shared on the Hulett Road reconstruction project, which is scheduled for 2026. Traffic calming islands and mini roundabouts may be installed instead of traditional speed bumps. The options are being analyzed and discussed with residents. While the Township has its Local Road Program for reconstruction, Ingham County controls the local road rights-of-way and safety measures. Residents are encouraged to voice their road concerns with the Ingham County Road Department and Ingham County Board of Commissioners.

More information about the Road Department and Board of Commissioners can be found below:

- [roads.ingham.org/departments\\_and\\_officials/roads](https://roads.ingham.org/departments_and_officials/roads)
- [bc.ingham.org/departments\\_and\\_officials/board\\_of\\_commissioners](https://bc.ingham.org/departments_and_officials/board_of_commissioners)

***What is being done about e-bikes and scooters speeding on pathways?***

Concerns have been raised about electric bikes and scooters exceeding 25 mph on township pathways. The Township does not currently have an enforcement ordinance in place for pathway/sidewalk speeding, but options will be reviewed.

***Can the Meridian Township Police Department enforce the “no parking” signs at the corner of Shaw and Lake Lansing?***

Since May 2025, the MTPD issued 31 no parking zone violations at the corner of Lake Lansing and Shaw and another 11 at the corner of Lake Lansing and Potter. These are two areas the MTPD continues to monitor and enforce.

**PARKS AND RECREATION**

***Can we have an inexpensive shelter at the small dog park?***

This idea is being presented to the Park Commission at their October 14, 2025 meeting.

***Are any improvements planned for Nancy Moore Park?***

Nancy Moore Park is scheduled for pavilion and restroom renovations in 2026. Staff will explore other potential improvements, such as fencing around the basketball court to protect children from animals.

***What is the status of maintenance and improvements at Riverside Cemetery?***

The deteriorating wrought iron fence has recently been removed. Plans are underway to restore the failing retaining walls on the west side of the cemetery. Staff are also working on new signage for the cemetery. This year, all Glendale Cemetery records were digitized, and there are plans to do the same for Riverside Cemetery in the future.

***What is the update on the suggestion to the Board to place the Township-owned 23 acres between the Okemos Post Office and the Central Fire Station in the Land Preservation Program?***

This item was previously discussed with the Land Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) and staff will follow up with the LPAB.

***As the parks and trails increase, will there be an increase in staffing?***

There are no net staffing increases in the 2026 township budget. There is one position in administration being eliminated, and one utility worker being added to assist with water meter replacements. As Township assets have increased, staff have explored ways to reduce certain maintenance activities to balance facility needs with available resources. For example, reducing certain mowed areas in various parklands where there is not active recreation activities. However, this is an area that requires constant reassessment.

**ELECTIONS**

***Why were August voting locations moved to a senior living facility?***

Precincts 18 and 19 were relocated to StoryPoint Independent Living after the previous voting site declined to host the August election. In addition, StoryPoint was an accessible facility and willing to host. However, there are parking concerns at StoryPoint, and alternative locations are being considered for future elections.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

***What can we do to reduce Meridian Township taxes?***

Only about 19-20% of the taxes collected by the Township are used for its direct operations. The

remainder supports Ingham County, local schools, CATA, Lansing Regional Airport, libraries, and other services. In 2025, the Township tax rate will decrease because the CATA Redi-Ride millage will be removed from tax bills and the Central Fire Station debt millage will end early due to the bond being paid off. Along with the Headlee reductions, the Township-only tax rate will drop to 9.9610 in 2025 from 10.2648 in 2024. These two items will partially offset increases in taxable value. For more background, the Township has created a [“Where Do My Property taxes Dollars Go?”](#) flyer. There are also flyers on the [Treasurer's Office webpage](#) that explain in greater detail where summer and winter tax bills go.

***Does the Township have any policies on Artificial Intelligence (AI)?***

The township is currently looking at developing a policy on AI, including reviewing model policies from other communities. AI tools can be helpful but also come with challenges that need to be considered carefully.

***When will Cornell Elementary be rebuilt?***

The Township does not oversee the public schools or determine their construction schedule. Okemos Public Schools construction updates can be found on their [bond website](#).

**Share Feedback/Comments**

Comments can always be sent anytime to the Township Board at [board@meridian.mi.us](mailto:board@meridian.mi.us). These will also be made a part of public communications in the next upcoming Board packet. For comments that are not posted publicly, you can email the Township Board at [townshipboard@meridian.mi.us](mailto:townshipboard@meridian.mi.us).

The final Listening Session of 2025 will be held on Thursday, November 13 from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm at the 2|42 Community Center (2630 Bennett Road, Okemos). Anyone unable to attend can provide feedback online at [bit.ly/ListeningSessionsForm](https://bit.ly/ListeningSessionsForm).