



November 13, 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 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 was not able to attend a session, they could provide feedback online at <https://bit.ly/ListeningSessionsForm>.

The November 13, 2025 Listening Session was attended by over 40 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, 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, 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 from Township Manager Tim Dempsey

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: Staff are looking at existing buildings in the Township, between 9,000-12,000 square feet, for a Senior Center only facility. The former Foods for Living and Rite Aid (Grand River/Central Park Drive intersection) building have been ruled due to having prospective tenants and/or cost. The existing Nokomis Learning Center is also being examined. However, the existing building is too small and would require an expansion. Using space at Meridian Mall is challenging due to expensive lease terms, common area fees, limited direct entrances, and parking proximity. The \$5 million State of Michigan grant awarded to the Township must be fully expensed on this project by September 30, 2026.

How does the Township plan to involve the Meridian Senior Center Advisory Board?

Once the Township has identified a viable location for the Senior Center, the Township will engage with the Advisory Board and other community seniors to ensure it is appropriately designed to meet their needs.

What specific efforts have been taken to collaborate with Okemos Public Schools district with regard to the Senior Center and utilizing the \$5 million state grant?

The Senior Center is currently located at Chippewa Middle School. The cost to construct a new Senior Center, at a comparable size to the existing center, is approximately \$9.8 million. This amount exceeds the Township's \$5 million grant and would require an additional funding source. While Okemos Public Schools is a willing partner, they do not have the financial resources to cover the difference or the ability to construct such a facility by the grant's September 30, 2026 deadline. The Township continues to have discussions with Okemos Public Schools and Haslett Public Schools regarding possible partnerships for a new Senior Center at some point in the future.

OTHER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND ISSUES

Copper Creek Subdivision in Haslett only has a few lots left. Has the next phase(s) been approved?

The next phase has not been approved yet, but the developers are working on the design. We expect the next phase to be approved early 2026.

Can new developments for multi-unit housing be a nicer color than depressing gray?

The Township does not have an ordinance that dictates building color. Architects and developers tend to follow trends, sometime resulting in similar styles across properties of a similar age.

We live in a RB zoning district. Currently, only homes zoned RAAA, RAA and RA can keep chickens, but I would love to keep a couple of backyard chickens.

The Township Board will review an ordinance update in 2026 to allow for backyard chickens in the RB zoning district.

Has there been any discussion to redevelop the gas station at Van Atta and Grand River?

We are not aware of any plans to redevelop this site.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Everyone should be concerned that businesses do not want to operate in Meridian Township. Prime lots are being used for car washes and fast food.

There are currently four car washes in the Township, with Mister Car Wash being constructed at the former Outback Steakhouse site on Marsh Road. These business decisions reflect market demand. While zoning regulations control general land uses, the Township cannot dictate which specific businesses operate if they fit within the allowed uses. Staff actively works to assist small business owners with identifying viable locations in the Township. Additionally, two new restaurants (Panda House and Altu's Ethiopian Cuisine) are coming to the Township in 2026.

What's being done to woo new vendors to Meridian Mall?

Township staff continue to work with mall management to support their efforts at securing new tenants. The Meridian Mall is performing relatively well considering the site does not have interstate frontage like other regional malls. Based on market data analyzed by staff, the mall gets 80,000 more annual visitors than the Eastwood Towne Center. Recently, Ashley Home Furnishings opened in the former Younkers space, occupying the last vacant anchor space at the mall.

LOCAL ROADS PROGRAM

STAFF UPDATE: The 2025 local road program has concluded for the year. Repaving projects have been completed in Everett Farms, Tacoma Hills, Lac du Mont, and along Tihart and Newman Roads. Planning for the 2026 road program is currently underway, and preliminarily includes:

Preliminary 2026 Local Road Program Project Limits				
Road Being Resurfaced	From	To	Length (Miles)	ZIP CODE
Hulett Rd	Bennett Rd	Okemos Rd	1.12	48864
Forest Hills Dr	Dobie Rd	530' east of the Greenwood Dr intersection where the curb and gutter begins on Forest Hills Dr	0.5375	48864
Greenwood Dr	Forest Hills Dr	Hatch Rd	0.4767	48864
Mercer Dr	Greenwood Dr	Arbor Dr	0.1176	48864
Marlborough Rd	Forest Hills Dr	Eastwood Dr	0.0625	48864
Oakwood Dr	Ponchartrain Dr	Birchwood Dr	0.1988	48864
Oakwood Dr	Forest Hills Dr	End	0.2434	48864
Seneca Dr	Shaker Blvd	Hamilton Rd	0.3864	48864
Oneida Dr	Seneca Dr	End	0.0862	48864
Keweenaw Dr	Oneida Dr	Seneca Dr	0.1222	48864
White Oak Dr	Cornell Rd	Wrightwind Dr/Fox Chase	0.0852	48864
Fox Chase	White Oak Dr/Wrightwind Dr	End	0.1326	48864
Wrightwind Dr	White Oak Dr/Fox Chase	End	0.18	48864
Spinnaker Ln	Starboard Dr	End	0.07	48864
Leeward Dr	Nautical Dr/Shoals Dr	End	0.4735	48864
Shoals Dr	Leeward Dr/Nautical Dr	Cornell Rd	0.2651	48864
Windreef Cir	Shoals Dr	End	0.0833	48864
Breakwataer Dr	Nautical Dr	End	0.4734	48864
Satinwood Dr	Silverwood Dr	Silkwood Dr	0.1354	48864
Mistywood Dr	Spicewood Dr S	End	0.1487	48864
Spicewood Dr N	Mistywood Dr	Spicewood Dr S/Ethel St	0.1108	48864
Ethel St	Spicewood Dr S/Spicewood Dr N	Conell Rd	0.0928	48864

Ivywood Dr	Alderwood Dr	End	0.0824	48864
Stoneycroft Dr	Birchwood Dr	End	0.125	48864
Pebblestone Dr	Stoneycroft Dr	Cherry Hill Dr	0.1424	48864
Washington Heights Dr	Hamilton Rd	Grand River Ave	0.1628	48864
Copperhill Dr	Mount Hope Rd	End	0.303	48864
Woodhill Dr	Comanche Dr	End	0.2509	48864
Nemoke Trl	Marsh Rd	End	0.4507	48840
Nemoke Ct	Nemoke Trl	End	0.0852	48840
Maple Ridge Rd	Rolling Hills Dr	Nemoke Trl	0.2159	48840
Rolling Hills Dr	Marsh Rd	Maple Ridge Dr	0.0729	48840
		Total Miles:	7.4933	

Since 2019, local road conditions have improved significantly with implementation of the Local Road Program. The number of roads in excellent and very good/good condition has increased while fair and poor roads have decreased, as illustrated by:

[2019 Pavement Rating Map \(ratings prior to the new road millage\)](#)

[2025 Post-Construction Pavement Rating Map](#)

What does black mean on the pavement rating (PASER) map?

The [PASER rating map](#) indicates road conditions on a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best), using different colors for each rating. Roads marked in black represent private, county primary, or state-controlled roads. These roads are excluded from the local road program, so their ratings are not shown on the map.

When are you going to fix Okemos Road between Central Park Drive and Nancy Moore Park-along the dip that always floods?

This project has been delayed due to the high construction costs. Because the area is in a floodplain, the road must be raised to help prevent future flooding. Okemos Road falls under the jurisdiction of the Ingham County Road Department; however, the Township has been working with partners at every level of government to secure funding for county primary roads.

Residents can submit any specific road concerns via email to dpw@meridian.mi.us.

PATHWAYS AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE

STAFF UPDATE: The pathway segments along Newton Road Park and Lake Lansing Road, as well as Bennett Road near the Schultz Veterinary clinic, have been completed, closing significant gaps in the pathway network. Land acquisition, planning, and design work for [Phase III of the MSU to Lake Lansing trail](#) is underway. The Township anticipates constructing a 1.8-mile segment of Phase III from Haslett Road to Lake Lansing Park North in 2026 and 2027. If the land can be acquired, the portion of Phase III that proposes to extend the existing Inter Urban Pathway from Marsh Road northeast to Haslett Road will be constructed. At this time, it does not appear that land can be acquired. For the time being, pedestrians and bicyclists can utilize existing sidewalks/pathways along the Marsh and Haslett Roads intersection.

Does the Board know that the Lake Lansing Special Assessment District (SAD) was set up for the maximum benefit for the Lake Lansing Property Owners Association members? No input was given to them from tier 2 owners before their decision to recommend the district to the County Board of Commissioners was made.

The Lake Lansing Dam is in need of repair and the SAD is one of two funding sources for this project. The SAD methodology used by the County, with input from the Township, is consistent with similar projects. The current estimated cost is \$1.2 million, with the Ingham County Road Department overseeing the work. The State of Michigan has awarded a \$750,000 appropriation for the project, significantly reducing the financial burden for property owners within the district who will be subject to special assessments. Initially, management was to be handled by the Ingham County Drain Commission.

ENVIRONMENT

Does Meridian Township have a plan to phase out and eliminate using chemical herbicides and pesticides for invasive species and use goats instead?

Meridian Township diligently prioritizes non-chemical methods whenever feasible; however, in some cases chemical treatments are necessary in order to be effective. When herbicides are used, we follow the safest application methods available. Our stewardship team maintains a management plan for each land preserve and oversees land management for our natural areas based on the biodiversity of each specific parcel. Because ecosystems vary widely across the township, invasive species management practices also vary by location. Additionally, several areas contain rare species that we actively work to protect. The Township has previously researched renting goats for invasive species management but it proved to be cost prohibitive.

How will the Township ensure its solar installations do not have negative environmental impacts from any possible hazardous materials that are part of the solar panel components, both while in operation and at decommissioning?

The Township will ensure that handling of solar panels is done in compliance with all applicable laws and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy. (EGLE) This is accomplished by working directly with EGLE, the EPA, registered recyclers, and engineering firms with expertise on current regulations and laws. For decommissioning of solar arrays that have reached the end of their useful life, or have been damaged by an act of nature or vandalism, legal disposal of solar panels often involves recycling them through licensed e-waste facilities or handling them as hazardous waste if they contain toxic materials. For residents who may have to properly recycle or dispose of their own solar panels, [EGLE maintains a list of registered electronic recyclers](#) that can be used to find a facility that can accept your solar panels.

TRAFFIC/PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

The Township is working with MDOT to improve safety and visibility at the three pedestrian islands along Grand River Avenue (M-43). The Township is also working with the Ingham County Road Department to add pedestrian crossings along Haslett Road, from Park Lake to Marsh Road. Other planned improvements would include a new pedestrian pathway along the south side of Haslett road, and the potential conversion of the roadway from four lanes to three, similar to Mt. Hope.

Last time we were at a listening session there was a concern about only having thirty police officers. Do we have more now?

Yes, the Department has been consistently increasing staffing. We are now fully staffed with 42 officers, with one of those in field training and one in the police academy.

The pedestrian island at Meijer is backwards. I have seen someone in a wheelchair trying to look back over his shoulder for oncoming traffic and is not safe.

MDOT configured this island to address the alignment and slope of the connecting sidewalk on the north (McDonald's) side of the roadway. This configuration was required due to the constrained conditions.

Has the feasibility of adding protected bike lanes to major roads (like Marsh and Haslett) been considered?

Except for Grand River (M-43), which is under jurisdiction of the state, all the roadways are under jurisdiction of Ingham County Road Department (ICRD). While ICRD does not implement protected bike lanes, they have added bike lanes on Lake Lansing Road, Mount Hope Road, Haslett Road, Newman Road, Jolly Road, and Central Park Drive through road diet implementation.

What are the rules about stopping at the pedestrian crossing lights at Hagadorn/Grand River Avenue?

Motorists must yield if they see a pedestrian and the pedestrian crosses when there is an opening in traffic.

Place speed bumps on Capeside Drive and Sower Boulevard to deter drivers from running the stop sign and speeding.

Speed humps must meet Ingham County Road Department guidelines and require a petition and special assessment process. The [ICRD policy](#) details that process. Prior to pursuing this option, interested residents can contact the Township's Department of Public Works at 517.853.4440 or dpw@meridian.mi.us for more background information.

Driving west on Mt. Hope from Okemos many people need to turn right onto Comanche and the speed limit is 45 mph, there have been numerous close calls. Would you consider reducing the speed to 35 mph?

The Ingham County Road Department has jurisdiction of this road, and a speed study would be require to make any changes. Speed studies rely on 85th percentile speeds of existing traffic, which sometimes result in speed limits being increased.

Any plans for a stoplight at Towner and Marsh?

The Ingham County Road Department does not have any current plans for a stoplight at this intersection.

Residents noticing recurring traffic safety issues are encouraged to utilize the Traffic Concern Form on the [Police Department website](#).

ELECTIONS

What is the process in Meridian Township for grassroots groups to get local proposals on the ballot?

More specific information on any proposal is necessary to provide clear direction. Township Clerk Angela Demas is happy to discuss the process for local proposals, including the timeline, laws, proposal language, and the numbers of petition signatures needed. Clerk Demas can be reached at 517.853.4304 or demas@meridian.mi.us.

TAXES AND BUDGETS

What is the cost breakdown of the cumulative projects, e.g, pathways, and the property tax impact?

Pathway projects are funded through both the Township's dedicated millage and Ingham County's pathway millage. The Township's pathway millage was adopted in 1974, last renewed in 2016 at 0.3333 mills, and has been reduced to 0.3270 mills (\$32.70 per \$100,000 in taxable value) due to Headlee reductions. When possible, the Township utilizes both county, state, and federal grant funding to supplement the construction of new pathways. The maintenance and operation of pathways remain a Township responsibility in perpetuity.

What is being done to control property taxes?

About 20% of the taxes the Township collects are for Township use. The remainder of taxes go to Ingham County (county operating, airport, etc.), local schools, state education tax, libraries, and more. Township taxes will be reduced at the end of 2025 due to the CATA Redi-Ride millage and Central Fire Station debt millage coming off tax bills. These two items should help offset some of the increases in taxable value. Taxable value increases are determined by the State of Michigan and based on inflationary factors, but never exceeding 5%. Visit our website to review the Where Do My Property Tax Dollars Go flyer:

www.meridian.mi.us/home/showpublisheddocument/27814/638937853055570000

What is being done to control expenses?

The Township undertakes a very thorough budgeting process each year since state law mandates a balanced budget. Residents can find budgets approved by the Township Board on our website: <https://www.meridian.mi.us/about-us/departments/finance-accounting/township-budget>

MISCELLANEOUS

Why don't we get township meetings televised anymore?

Township Board meetings, along with the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Park Commission (some, but not all), and Environmental Commission are all televised and can be viewed on Comcast/Xfinity channel 21 or streamed online and available for replay at <https://www.youtube.com/user/21HOMTV> or <https://meridianmi.new.swagit.com/views/200/live>.

Can hunters camp on Township property as part of the Deer Management Program?

No. Camping is not allowed on any Township land reserves or parks. Hunters that participate in the Deer Management Program are allowed to setup tree and ground stands. Most blinds are tree blinds, but we do allow ground blinds for hunters with disabilities or related needs. Sometimes the blinds can look like camping tents. The hunters are required to post their license number on the stand. Hunters must also display a Meridian Township hunting placard in their vehicle, typically on the dashboard. For more information about the Deer Management Program, visit our webpage at <https://www.meridian.mi.us/DeerManagement>.

Share Feedback/Comments

Comments can always be sent anytime to the Township Board at 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.