

The National

CITIZEN SURVEY™

2003

Report of Results for Meridian Township, MI



Submitted by:

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URVEY BACKGROUND **ABOUT THE NATIONAL CITIZEN SURVEY™**

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

The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality survey methods and comparable results across The National Citizen Survey™ jurisdictions. Participating households are selected at random and the household member who responds is selected without bias. Multiple mailings give each household more than one chance to participate with self-addressed and postage paid envelopes. Results are statistically reweighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of the entire community.

The National Citizen Survey™ customized for this jurisdiction was developed in close cooperation with local jurisdiction staff. Meridian Township staff selected items from a menu of questions about services and community problems; they defined the jurisdiction boundaries we used for sampling; and they provided the appropriate letterhead and signatures for mailings. Meridian Township staff also determined local interest in a variety of add-on options to The National Citizen Survey™ Basic Service.

UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS

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, 66 were undeliverable due to vacant or “not found” addresses. Completed surveys were received from 429 residents, for a response rate of 38%. Typically, the response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% 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 429 residents is generally no greater than plus or minus 5 percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample.

The results were weighted to reflect the demographic profile of all residents in Meridian Township. (For more information on the survey methodology, see Appendix II. A copy of the survey materials can be found in Appendix III.)

Survey Validity

The question of survey validity has two parts: 1) how can we be confident that the results from our sample are representative of the results we would have gotten had we administered the survey to the entire population? and 2) how closely do the perspectives recorded on the survey reflect what residents really believe or do?

To answer the first question, we use the best survey research practices for the resources spent to assure that the results from the sample reflect the opinions of residents in the entire jurisdiction. These practices include:

- 1) Using a mail-out/mail-back methodology, which typically gets a higher response rate than phone for the same dollars spent.
- 2) Selecting households at random within the jurisdiction.

- 3) Over-sampling attached units to improve response from hard-to-reach, lower income, or younger apartment dwellers.
- 4) Selecting the respondent within the household using an unbiased sampling procedure¹.
- 5) Contacting potential respondents three times to encourage response from people who may have different opinions or habits than those who would respond with only a single prompt.
- 6) Soliciting response on jurisdiction letterhead signed by the highest ranking elected official or staff member.
- 7) Providing a self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope.
- 8) Offering the survey in Spanish when appropriate and requested by city officials.
- 9) Using the most recent available information about the characteristics of jurisdiction residents to reweight the data to reflect the demographics of the population.

The answer to the second question about how closely the perspectives recorded on the survey reflect what residents really believe or do is more complex. Resident responses to surveys are influenced by a variety of factors. For questions about service quality, residents' expectations for service quality play a role as well as the "objective" quality of the service provided, the way the resident perceives the entire community (that is, the context in which the service is provided), the scale on which the resident is asked to record her opinion and, of course, the opinion, itself, that a resident holds about the service. Similarly a resident's report of certain behaviors is colored by what he or she believes is the socially desirable response (e.g. reporting tolerant behaviors toward "oppressed groups," likelihood of voting a tax increase for services to poor people, use of alternative modes of travel to work besides the single occupancy vehicle), her memory of the actual behavior (if it is not a question speculating about future actions, like a vote), her confidence that she can be honest without suffering any

¹ The birthday method requests that the respondent in the household be the adult (18 years old or older) who most recently had a birthday, irrespective of year of birth.

negative consequences (thus the need for anonymity) as well as the actual behavior itself.

How closely survey results come to recording the way a person really feels or behaves often is measured by the coincidence of reported behavior with observed current behavior (e.g. driving habits), reported intentions to behave with observed future behavior (e.g. voting choices) or reported opinions about current community quality with objective characteristics of the community (e.g. feelings of safety correlated with rates of crime). There is a body of scientific literature that has investigated the relationship between reported behaviors and actual behaviors. Well-conducted surveys, by and large, do capture true respondent behaviors or intentions to act with great accuracy. Predictions of voting outcomes tend to be quite accurate using survey research, as do reported behaviors that are not about highly sensitive issues (e.g. family abuse or other illegal or morally sanctioned activities). For self-reports about highly sensitive issues, statistical adjustments can be made to correct for the respondents' tendency to report what they think the "correct" response should be.

Research on the correlation of resident opinion about service quality and "objective" ratings of service quality tend to be ambiguous, some showing stronger relationships than others. NRC's own research has demonstrated that residents who report the lowest ratings of street repair live in communities with objectively worse street conditions than those who report high ratings of street repair (based on road quality, delay in street repair, number of road repair employees). Similarly, the lowest rated fire services appear to be "objectively" worse than the highest rated fire services (expenditures per capita, response time, "professional" status of fire fighters, breadth of services and training provided). Whether some research confirms or disconfirms that relationship between what residents think about a community and what can be seen "objectively" in a community, we have argued that resident opinion is a perspective that cannot be ignored by government administrators. Elsewhere we have written, "If you collect trash three times a day but residents think that your trash haul is lousy, you still have a problem."

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). This scale has important advantages over other scale possibilities (very good to very bad; very satisfied to very dissatisfied; strongly agree to strongly disagree, as examples). EGFP is used by the plurality of jurisdictions conducting citizen surveys across the U.S. The advantage of familiarity is one we did not want to dismiss because elected officials, staff and residents already are acquainted with opinion surveys measured this way. EGFP also has the advantage of offering three positive options, rather than only two, over which a resident can offer an opinion. 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).

“Don’t Know” Responses

On many of the questions in the survey respondents may answer “don’t know.” The proportion of respondents giving this reply is shown in the full set of responses included in Appendix I. However, these responses have been removed from the analyses presented in the body of the report. In other words, the tables and graphs display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

For two of the items related to crime victimization and crime reporting, “don’t know” responses were not removed. These questions were not evaluative; rather, respondents were asked if they or any member of their household had been a victim of a crime within the last year. If they were, they were then asked whether the crime had been reported to police.

Putting Evaluations Onto a 100-Point Scale

Although responses to many of the evaluative questions were made on a 4 point scale with 4 representing the best rating and 1 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 5 points based on all respondents.



COMMUNITY LIFE

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 Meridian Township. They also evaluated characteristics of the community, and gave their perceptions of safety in Meridian Township. The questionnaire assessed use of the amenities of the community and involvement by respondents in the civic and economic life of Meridian Township.

QUALITY OF LIFE

When asked to rate the overall quality of life in Meridian Township, 23% of respondents thought it was “excellent.” No one rated overall quality of life as “poor.” Meridian Township as a place to live received an average rating of 74 on a 100-point scale. Other ratings can be seen in the charts on the following page.

Figure 1: Overall Quality of Life in Meridian Township

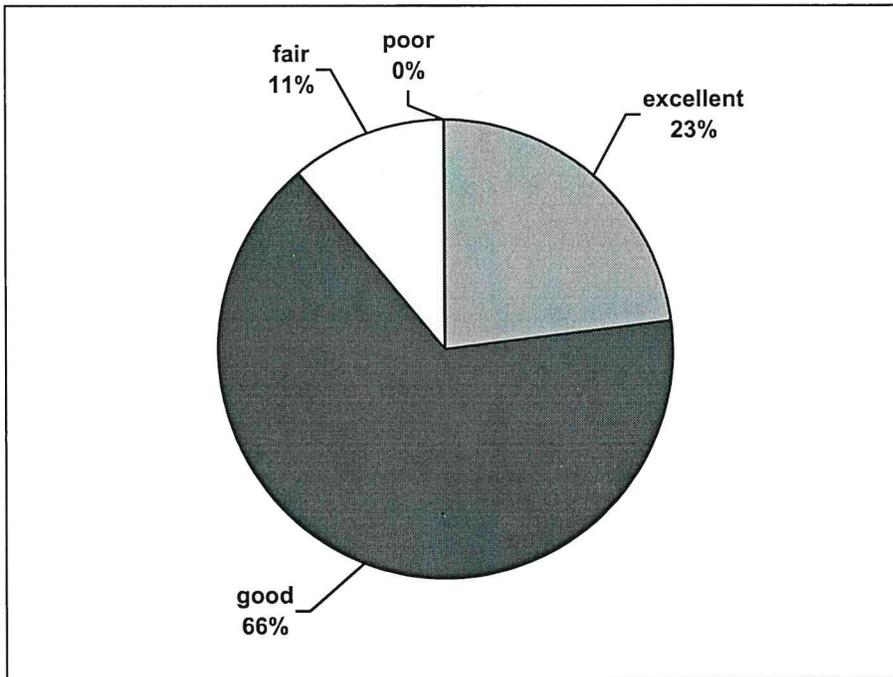


Figure 2: Quality of Life Ratings

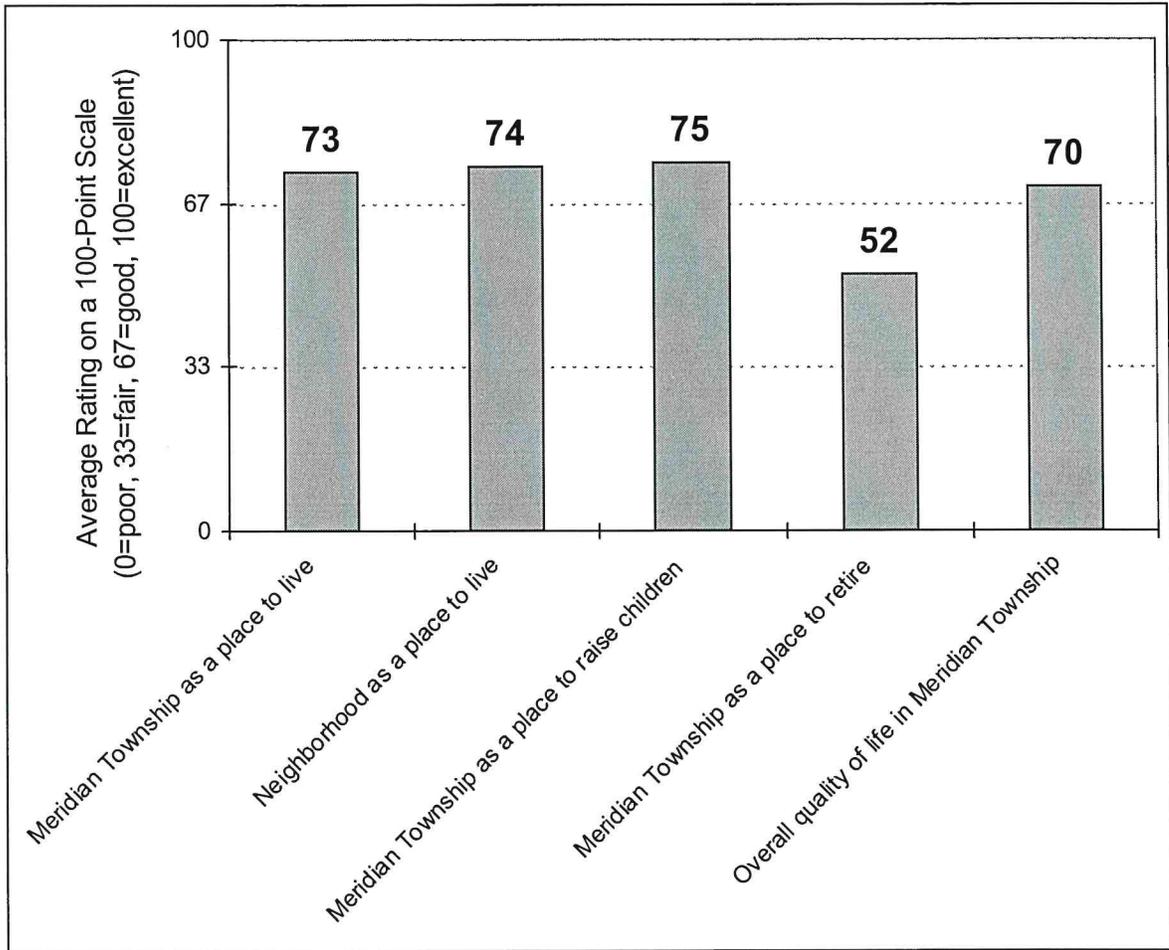


Figure 2b: Quality of Life Ratings

	Percent of Respondents				
	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
How do you rate Meridian Township as a place to live?	29%	62%	8%	0%	100%
How do you rate your neighborhood as a place to live?	37%	51%	11%	1%	100%
How do you rate Meridian Township as a place to raise children?	35%	54%	11%	0%	100%
How do you rate Meridian Township as a place to retire?	16%	39%	29%	15%	100%
How do you rate the overall quality of life in Meridian Township?	23%	66%	11%	0%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

RATINGS OF COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS IN MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP

The highest rated characteristics of Meridian Township were shopping opportunities, overall appearance, and openness and acceptance. When asked about potential problems in Meridian Township, the three concerns rated by the highest proportion of respondents as a “major problem” were taxes, too much growth, and traffic congestion. The rate of population growth in Meridian Township was viewed as “too fast” by 42% of respondents, while 12% thought it was “too slow.”

Figure 3: Characteristics of the Community: General and Opportunities

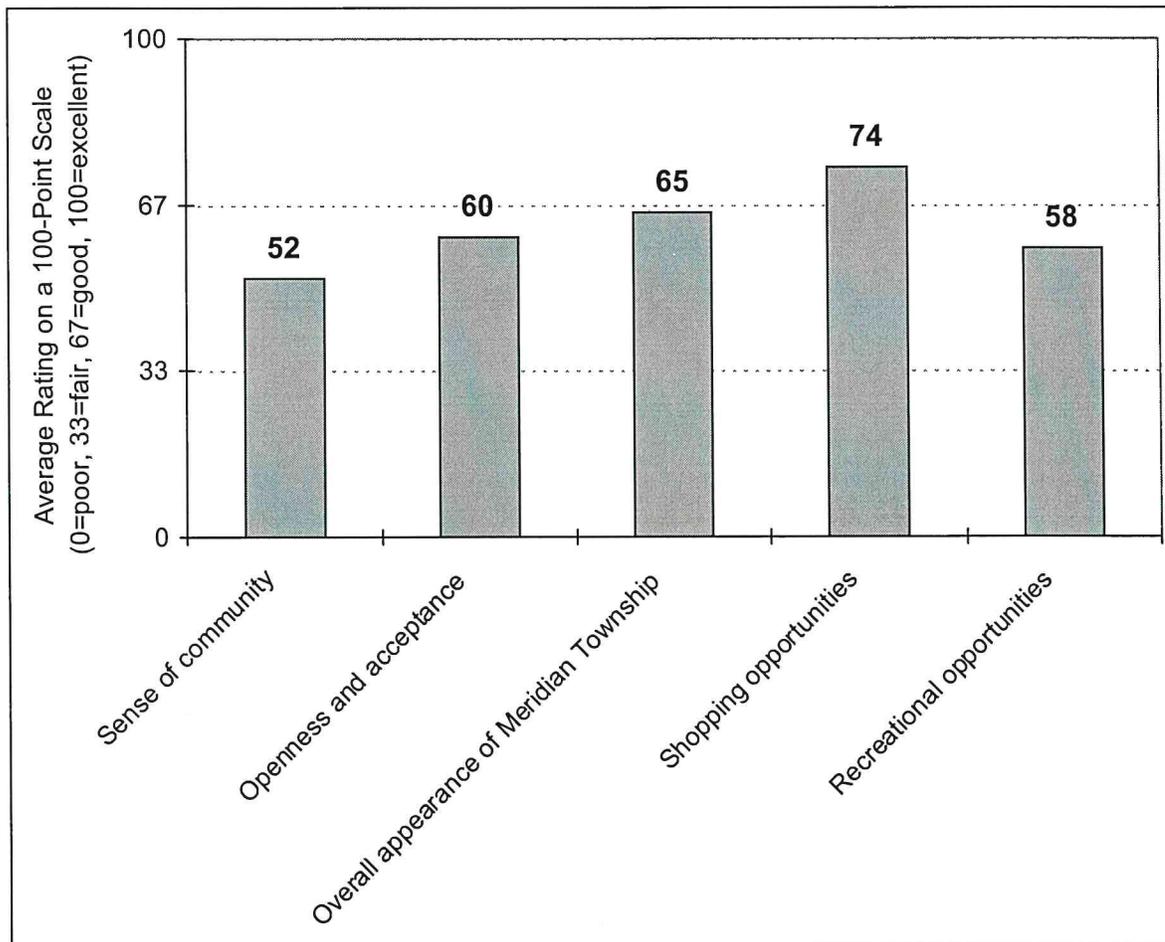


Figure 3b: Characteristics of the Community: General and Opportunities					
	Percent of Respondents				
	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Sense of community	8%	50%	33%	9%	100%
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	15%	54%	26%	5%	100%
Overall appearance of Meridian Township	17%	63%	18%	2%	100%
Shopping opportunities	40%	44%	15%	2%	100%
Recreational opportunities	17%	47%	29%	6%	100%
Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed					

Figure 4: Characteristics of the Community: Access

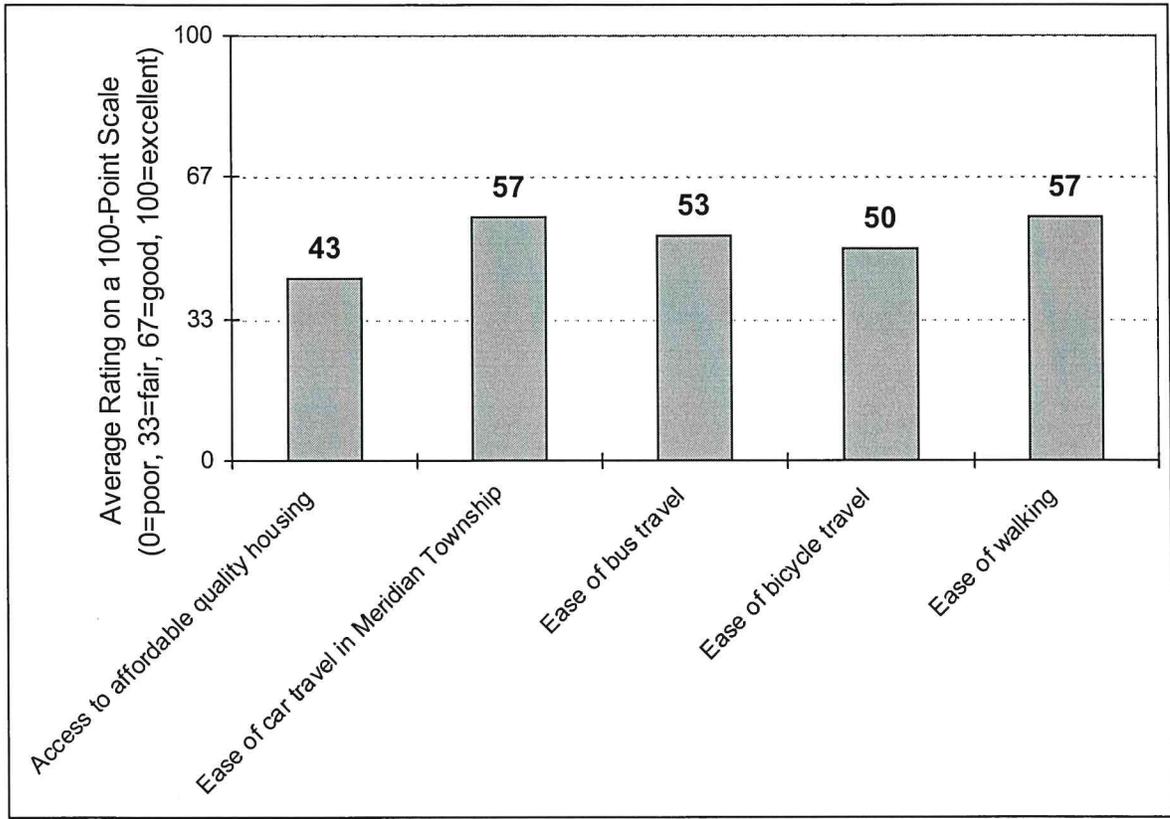


Figure 4b: Characteristics of the Community: Access and Mobility

	Percent of Respondents				
	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Access to affordable quality housing	8%	33%	40%	20%	100%
Ease of car travel in Meridian Township	15%	50%	27%	9%	100%
Ease of bus travel in Meridian Township	14%	45%	24%	17%	100%
Ease of bicycle travel in Meridian Township	11%	43%	31%	15%	100%
Ease of walking in Meridian Township	17%	45%	30%	8%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

Figure 5: Ratings of Potential Problems in Meridian Township

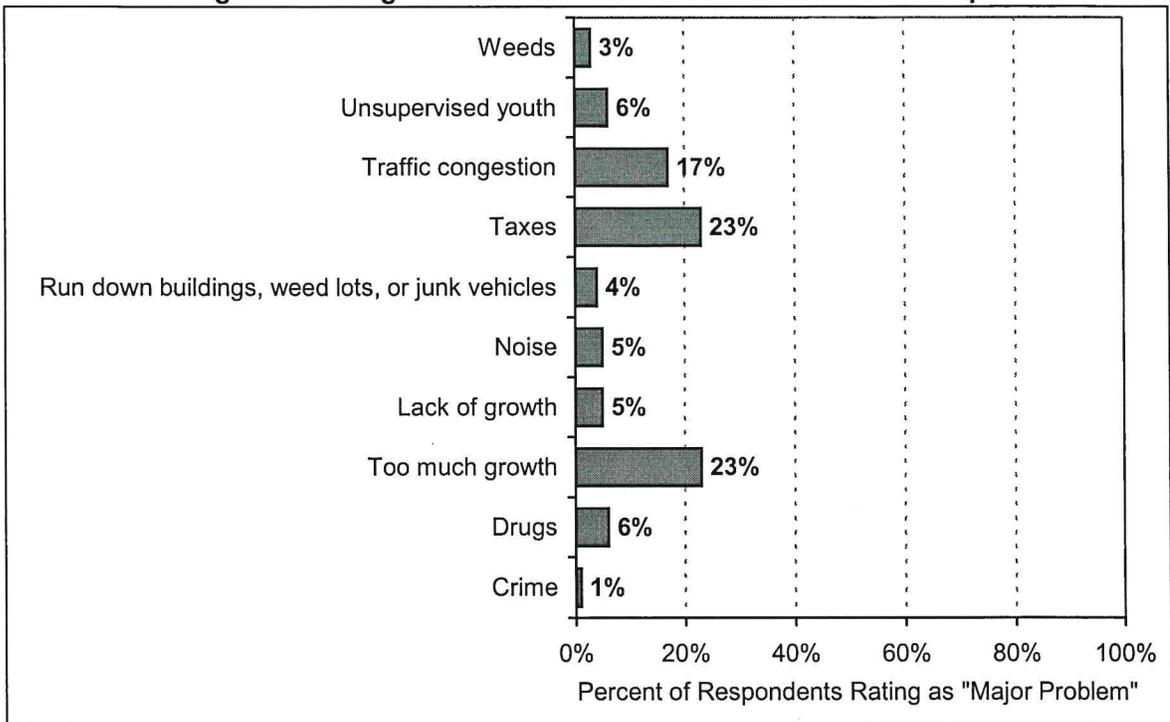


Figure 6: Ratings of Rates of Growth in Meridian Township

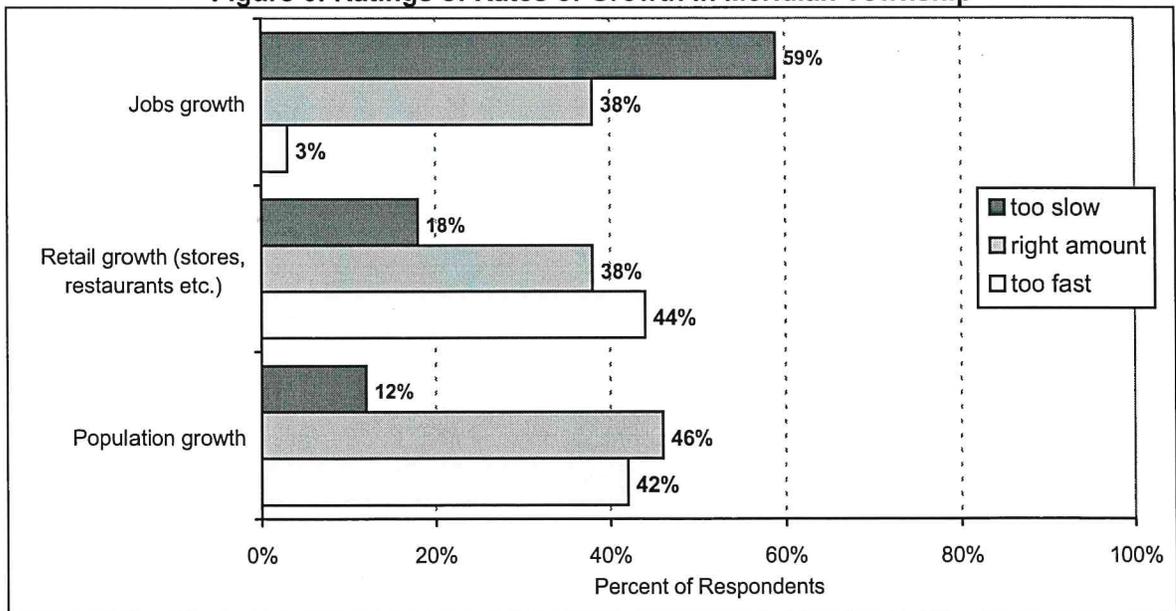
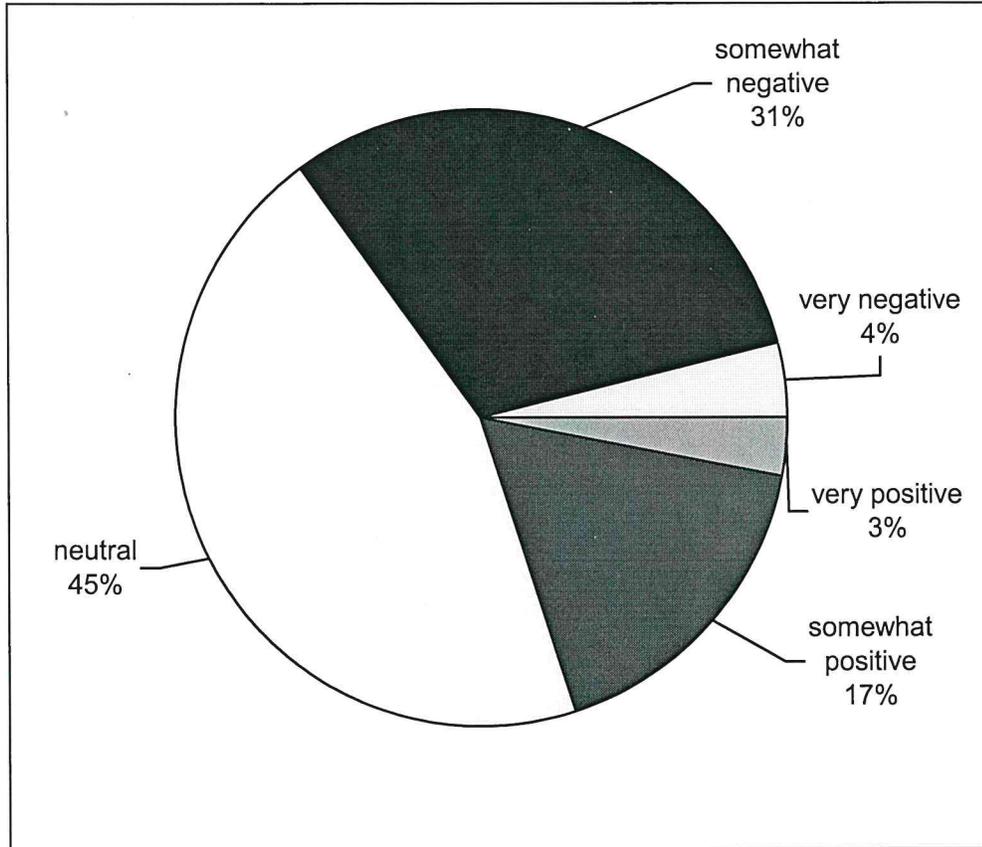


Figure 7: Perceptions of Economy

What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be



PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

When evaluating safety in the community, 89% of respondents felt “somewhat” or “very safe” from violent crimes in Meridian Township. In their neighborhood after dark, 88% of survey participants felt “somewhat” or “very safe.”

As assessed by the survey, 12% 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, 63% had reported it to police.

Figure 8: Ratings of Safety from Various Problems in Meridian Township

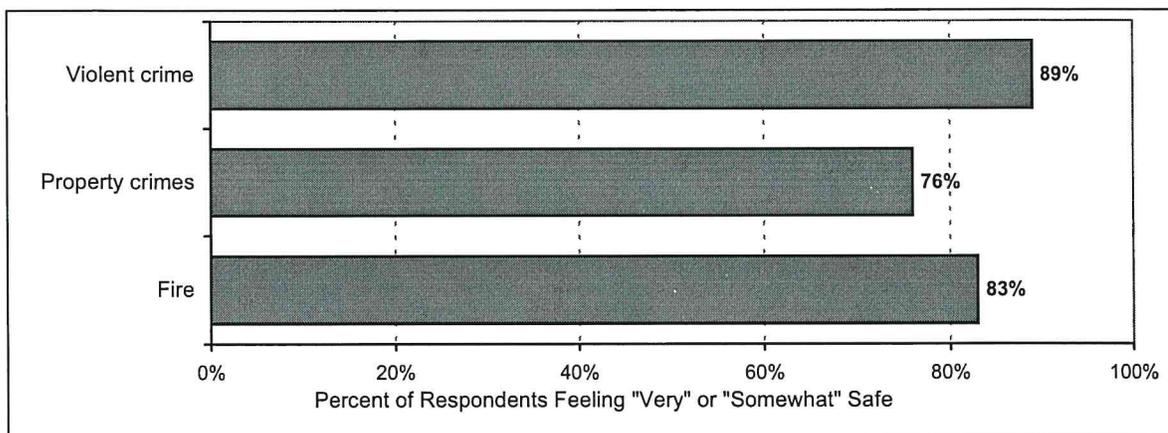


Figure 9: Ratings of Safety in Various Areas in Meridian Township

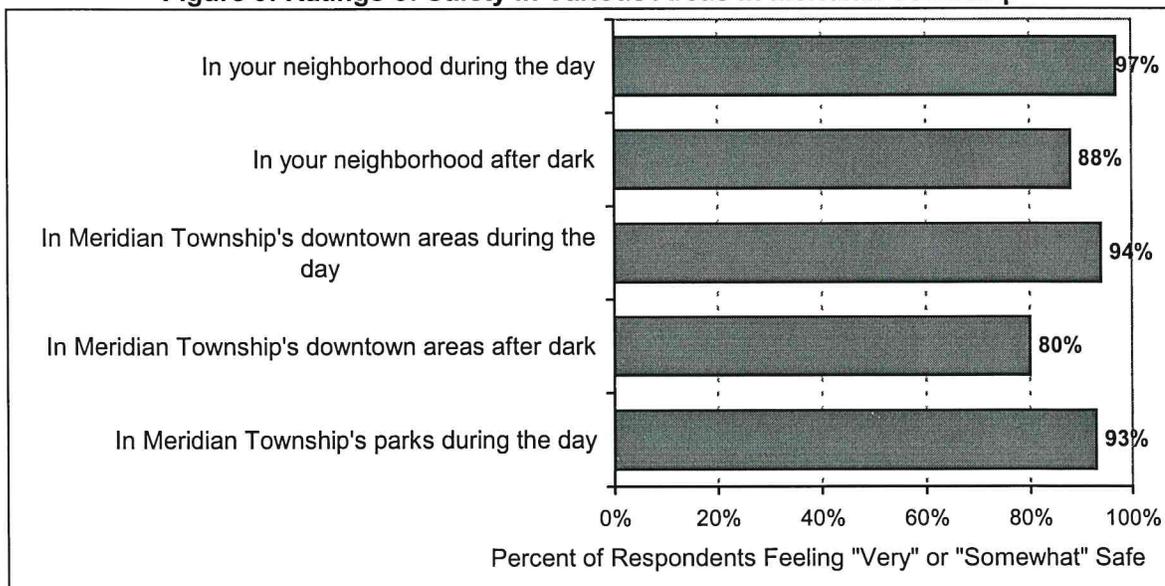


Figure 10: Percent of Respondents' Households That Were Victim of a Crime in the Last 12 Months

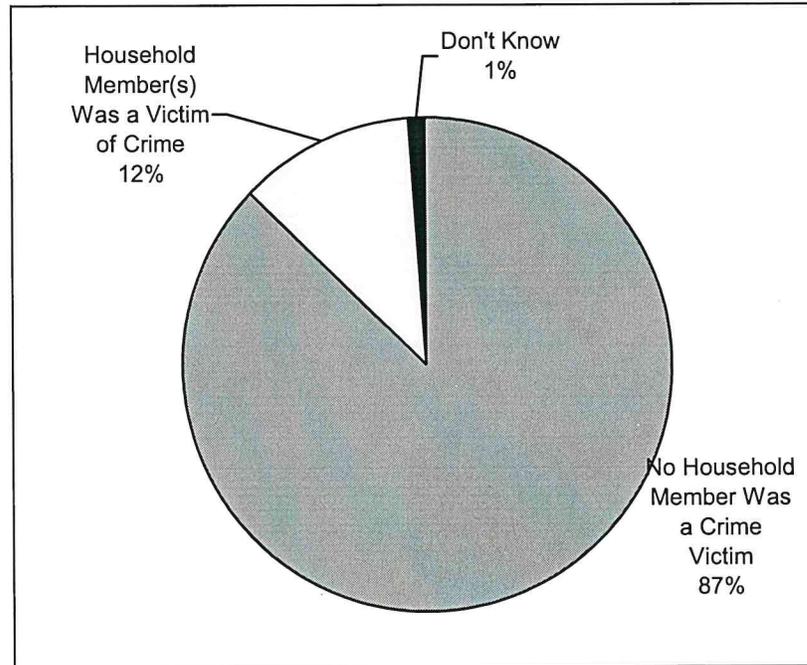
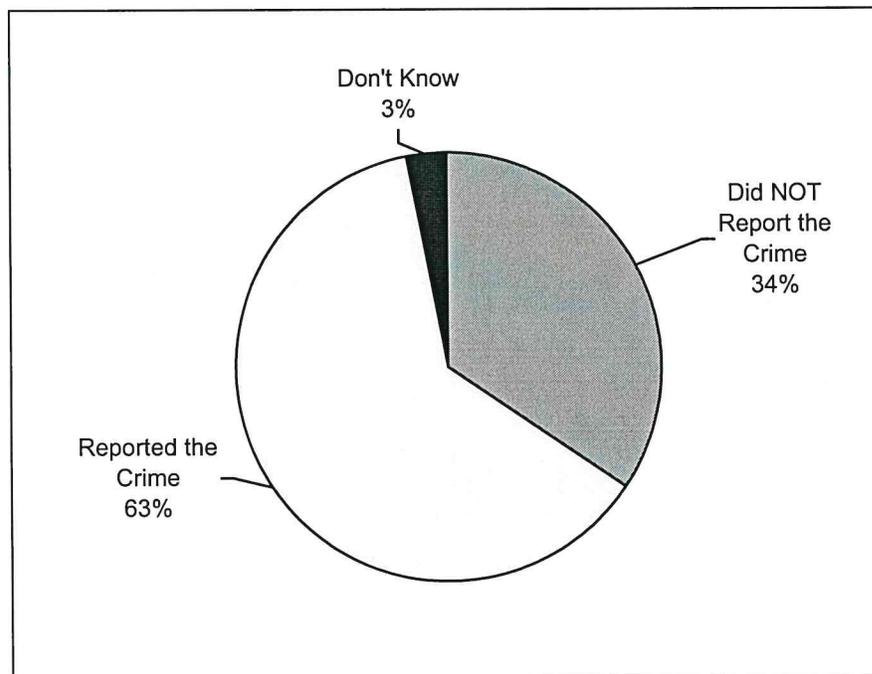


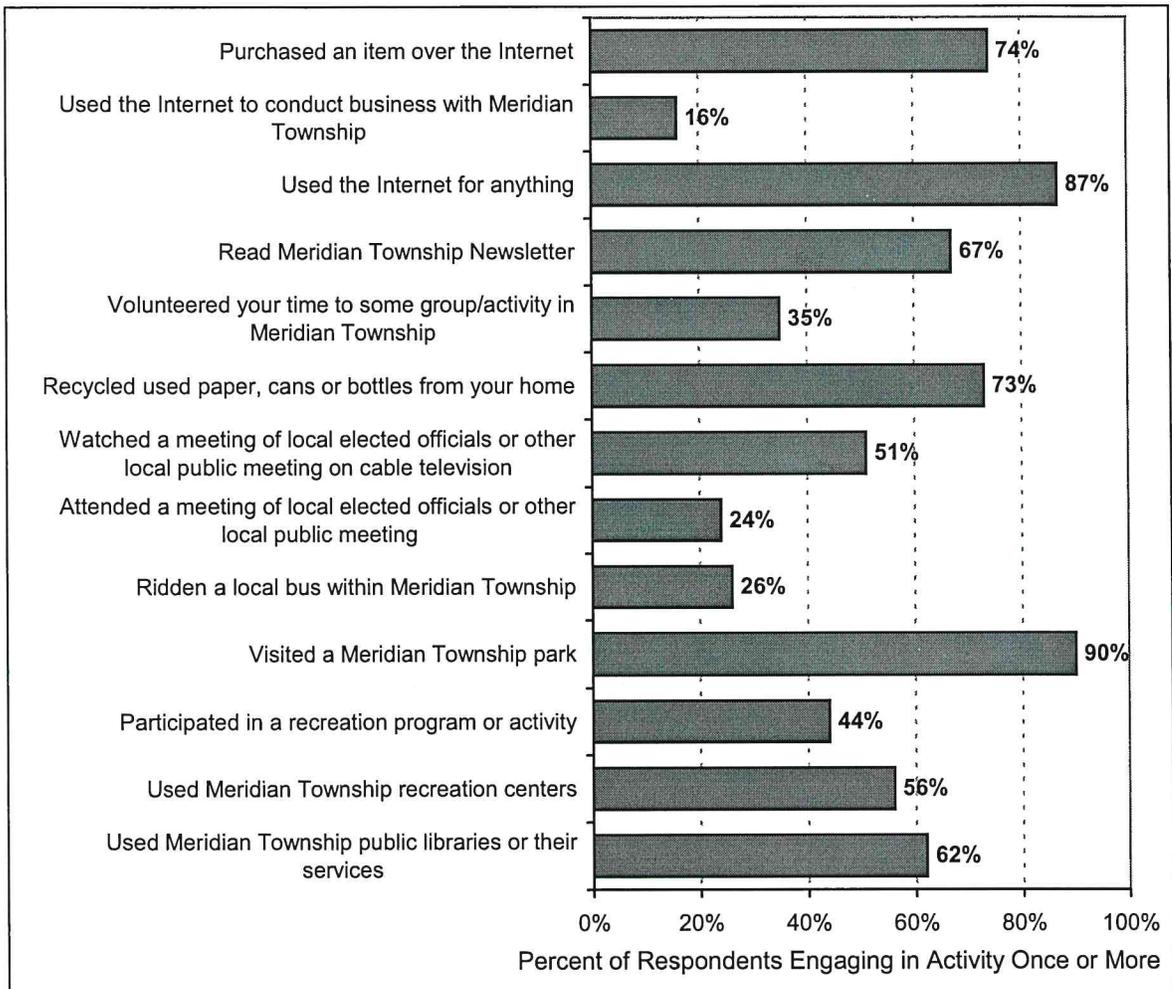
Figure 11: Percent of Respondents' Households That Were Victim of a Crime Who Reported the Crime



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Participation in the civic, social and economic life of Meridian Township during the past year was assessed on the survey. The proportion of respondents engaging in various activities is shown in the chart below. Voter status was also estimated.² Among those completing the questionnaire, 90% reported visiting a Meridian Township park in the past year.

Figure 12: Percent of Respondents Engaging in Various Activities in Meridian Township in the Past Year



² In general on a survey, a greater proportion of people will report having voted, than actual voting records verify.

Figure 13: Voter Status			
	Percent of Respondents		
	no	yes	Total
Did you vote in the last election?	22%	78%	100%
Are you likely to vote in the next election?	7%	93%	100%



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Several aspects of the government of Meridian Township 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 Meridian Township. Those who had any contact with a Meridian Township employee in the past year gave their impressions of the most recent encounter.

PUBLIC TRUST

When asked to evaluate whether they felt they received good value for taxes they pay, residents gave an average rating of 61 on a 100-point scale.

Figure 14: Ratings of Public Trust

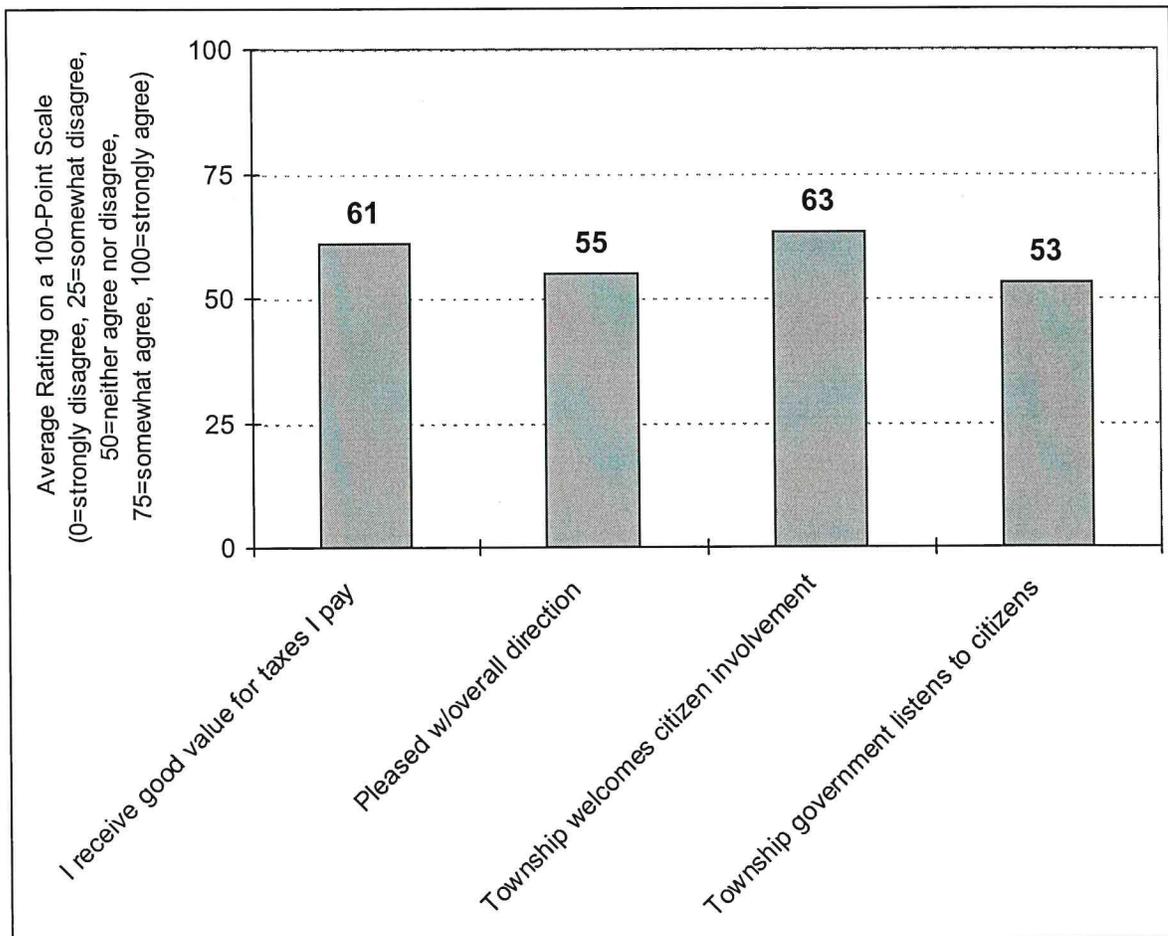


Figure 14b: Public Trust Ratings						
	Percent of Respondents					Total
	strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree nor disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree	
I receive good value for Meridian Township taxes I pay	12%	47%	23%	11%	7%	100%
I am pleased with the overall direction that Meridian Township is taking	11%	36%	20%	27%	6%	100%
Meridian Township government welcomes citizen involvement	15%	42%	27%	11%	5%	100%
Meridian Township government listens to citizens	9%	33%	27%	22%	8%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

SERVICES PROVIDED BY MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP

The overall quality of services provided by Meridian Township was rated as 65 on a 100-point scale. Ratings given to specific services are shown on the following pages.

Figure 15: Overall Quality of Services Provided by Meridian Township

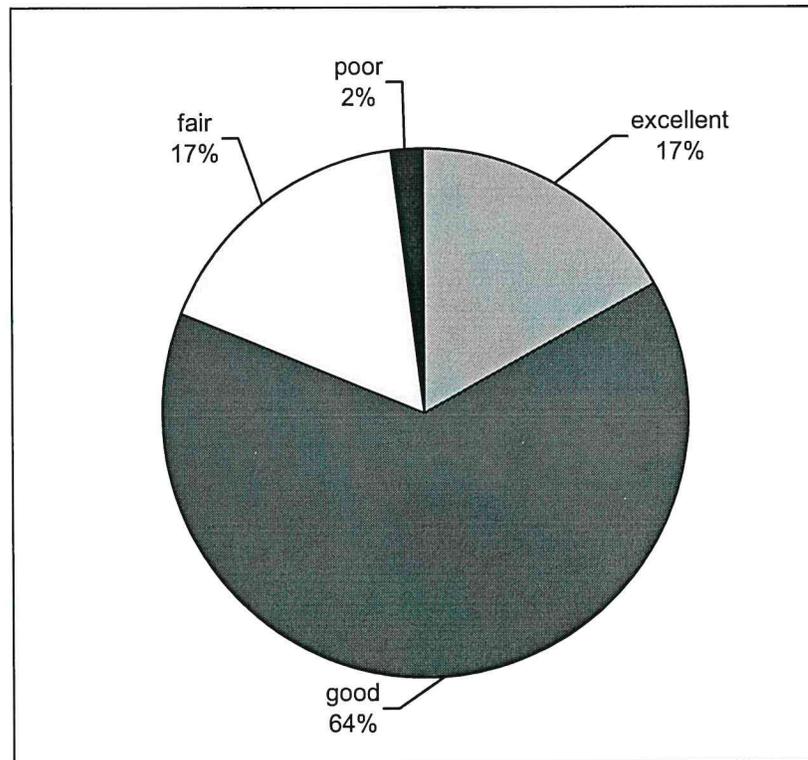


Figure 16: Rating of Overall Quality of Services Provided by Various Levels of Government

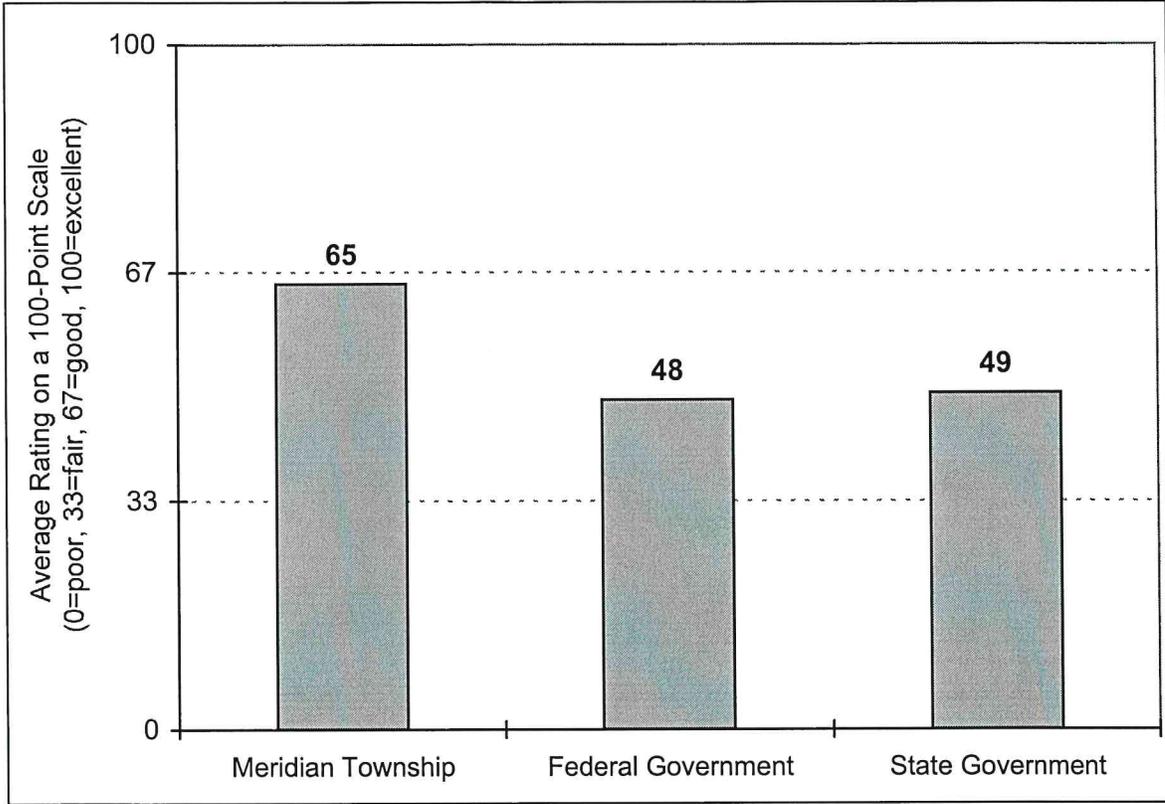


Figure 16b: Overall Quality of Services: Meridian Township, Federal Government and State Government

	Percent of Respondents				
	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by Meridian Township?	17%	64%	17%	2%	100%
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by the Federal Government?	8%	41%	37%	14%	100%
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by the State Government?	7%	45%	36%	12%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

Figure 17: Quality of Public Safety Services

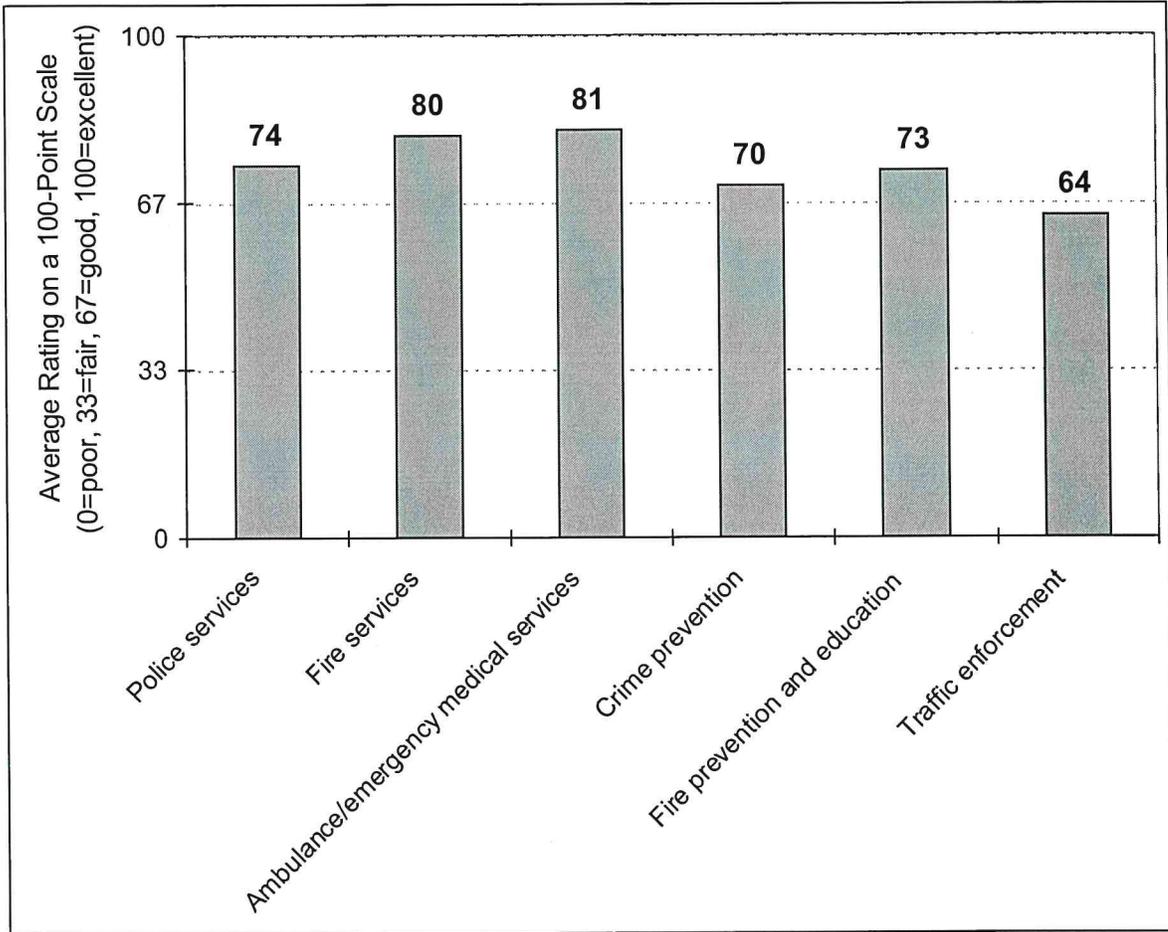


Figure 17b: Quality of Public Safety Services

	Percent of Respondents				
	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Police services	36%	53%	9%	2%	100%
Fire services	43%	52%	4%	0%	100%
Ambulance/emergency medical services	47%	49%	4%	0%	100%
Crime prevention	28%	55%	15%	2%	100%
Fire prevention and education	33%	53%	12%	2%	100%
Traffic enforcement	23%	52%	18%	7%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

Figure 18: Quality of Transportation Services

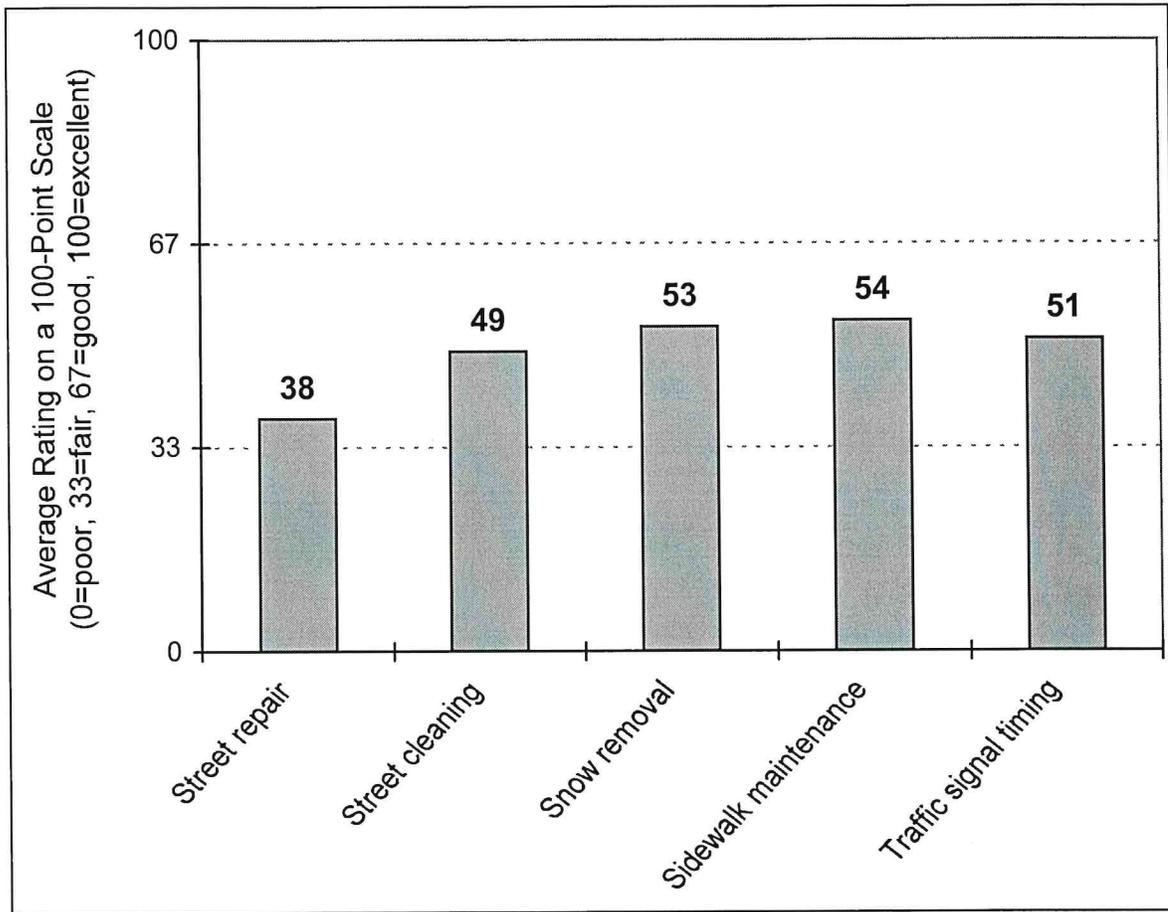
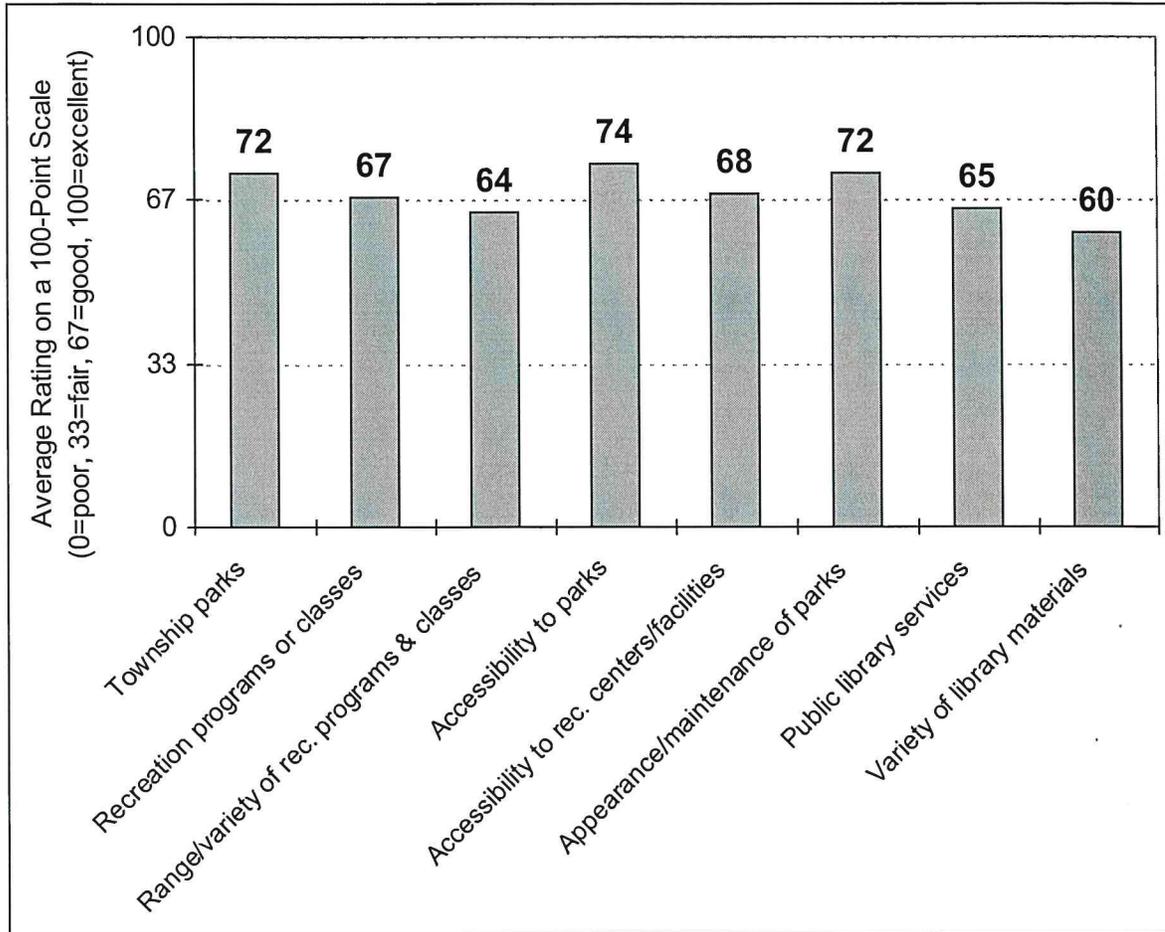


Figure 18b: Quality of Transportation Services

	Percent of Respondents				
	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Street repair	5%	28%	44%	24%	100%
Street cleaning	11%	38%	36%	15%	100%
Snow removal	12%	45%	30%	12%	100%
Sidewalk maintenance	10%	49%	32%	9%	100%
Traffic signal timing	9%	48%	29%	14%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

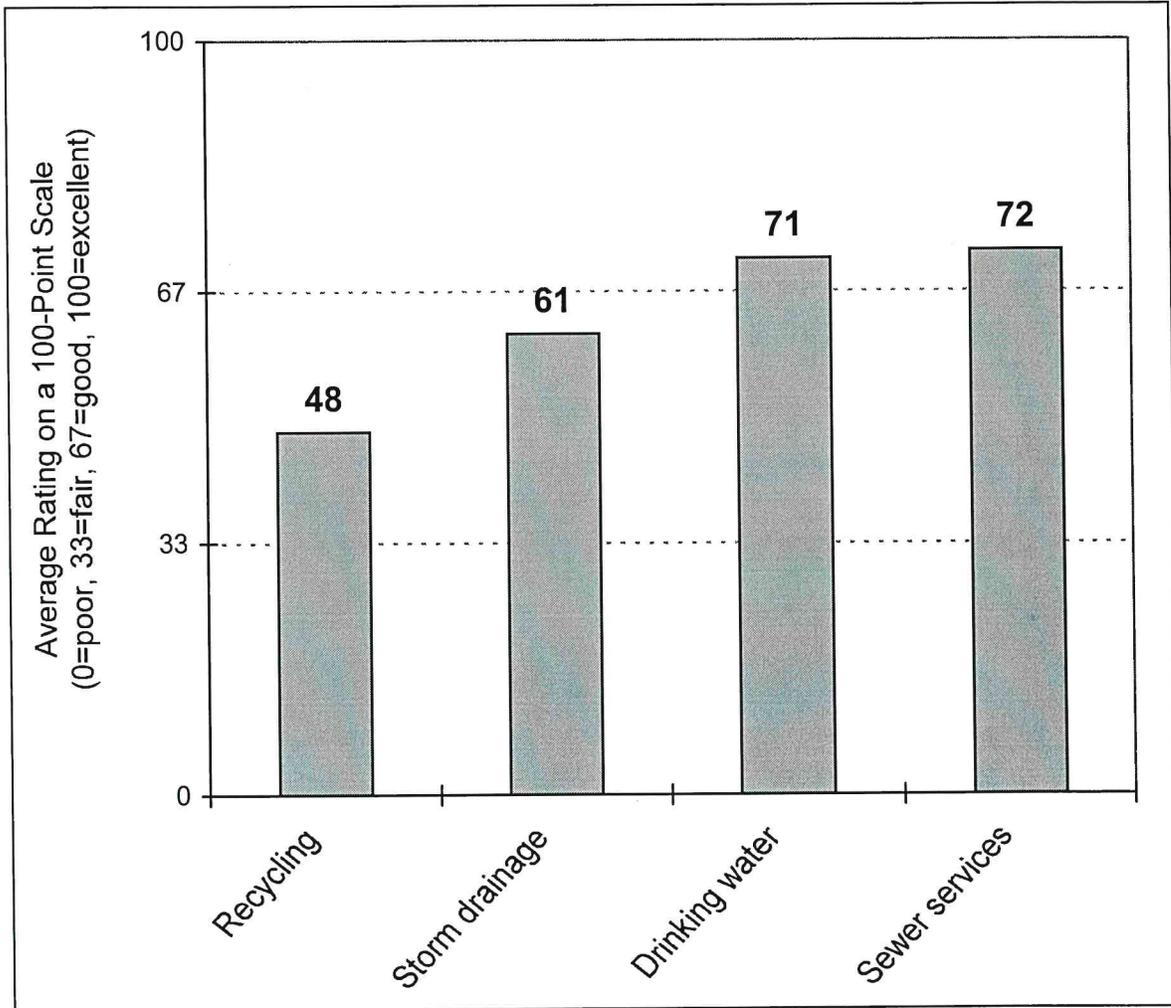
Figure 19: Quality of Leisure Services



	Percent of Respondents				
	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Township parks	33%	54%	11%	3%	100%
Recreation programs or classes	25%	55%	17%	3%	100%
Range/variety of recreation programs and classes	24%	47%	26%	3%	100%
Accessibility of parks	34%	53%	11%	1%	100%
Accessibility of recreation centers/facilities	26%	54%	17%	3%	100%
Appearance/maintenance of parks	31%	57%	11%	1%	100%
Public library services	25%	52%	15%	7%	100%
Variety of library materials	19%	49%	26%	7%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

Figure 20: Quality of Utility Services



	Percent of Respondents				
	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Recycling	14%	39%	23%	23%	100%
Storm drainage	17%	55%	23%	6%	100%
Drinking water	37%	44%	16%	4%	100%
Sewer services	30%	57%	12%	1%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

Figure 21: Quality of Planning and Code Enforcement Services

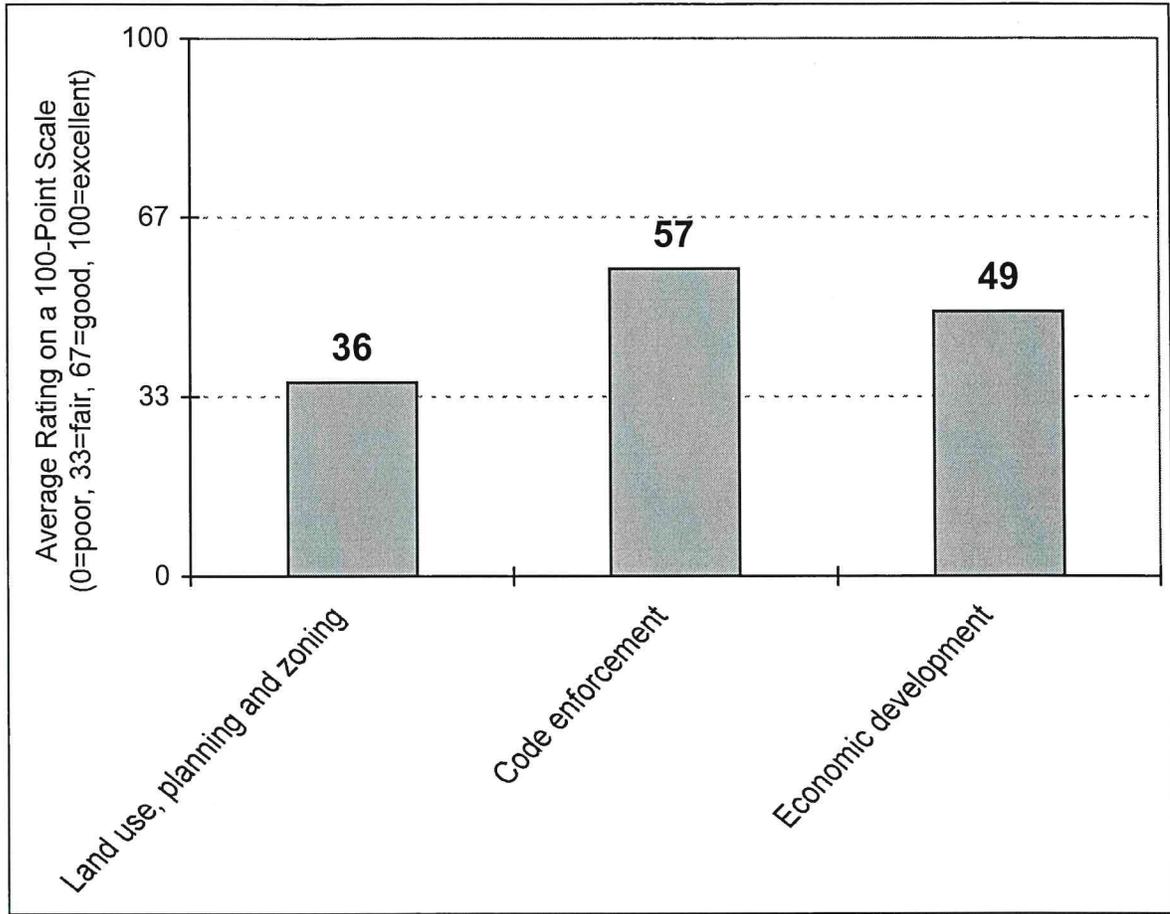


Figure 21b: Quality of Planning and Code Enforcement Services

	Percent of Respondents				
	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Land use, planning and zoning	7%	27%	32%	34%	100%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	14%	49%	28%	8%	100%
Economic development	10%	42%	34%	14%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

Figure 22: Quality of Services to Special Populations and Other Services

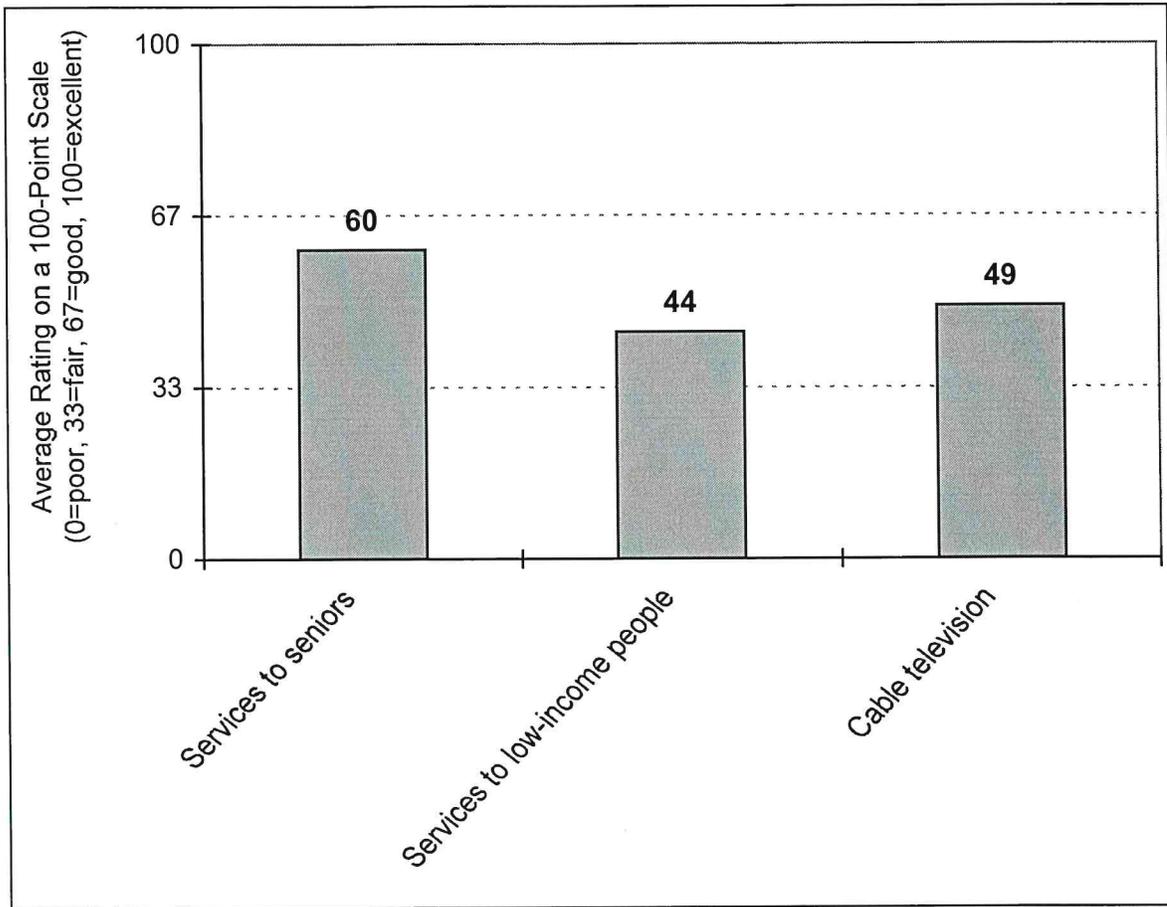


Figure 22b: Quality of Services to Special Populations and Other Services

	Percent of Respondents				
	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Services to seniors	17%	53%	25%	5%	100%
Services to low-income people	10%	40%	22%	28%	100%
Cable television	12%	40%	32%	16%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP EMPLOYEES

Impressions of Meridian Township employees were assessed on the questionnaire. Those who had been in contact with a Meridian Township employee in the past year (46%) rated their overall impression as 73 on a 100-point scale.

Figure 23: Percent of Respondents Who Had Contact with a Meridian Township Employee

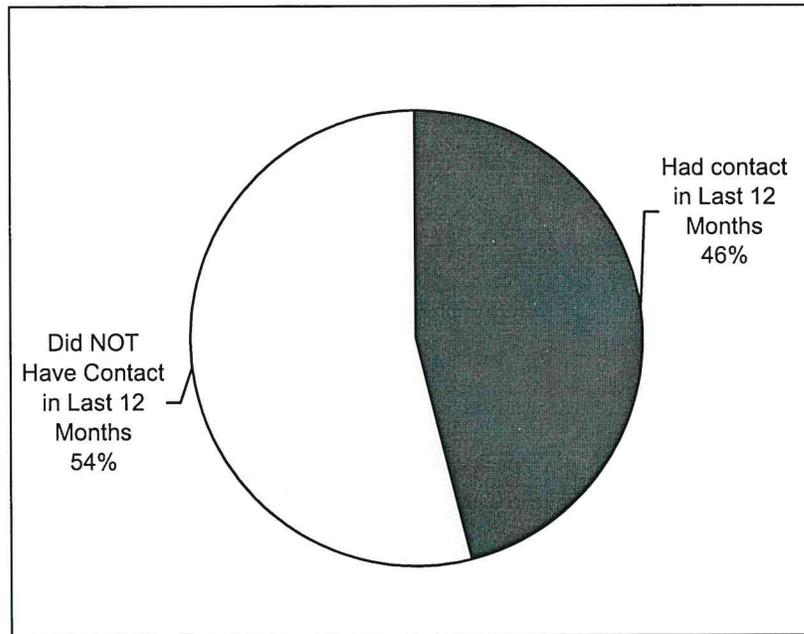


Figure 24: Ratings of Contact with Meridian Township Employees

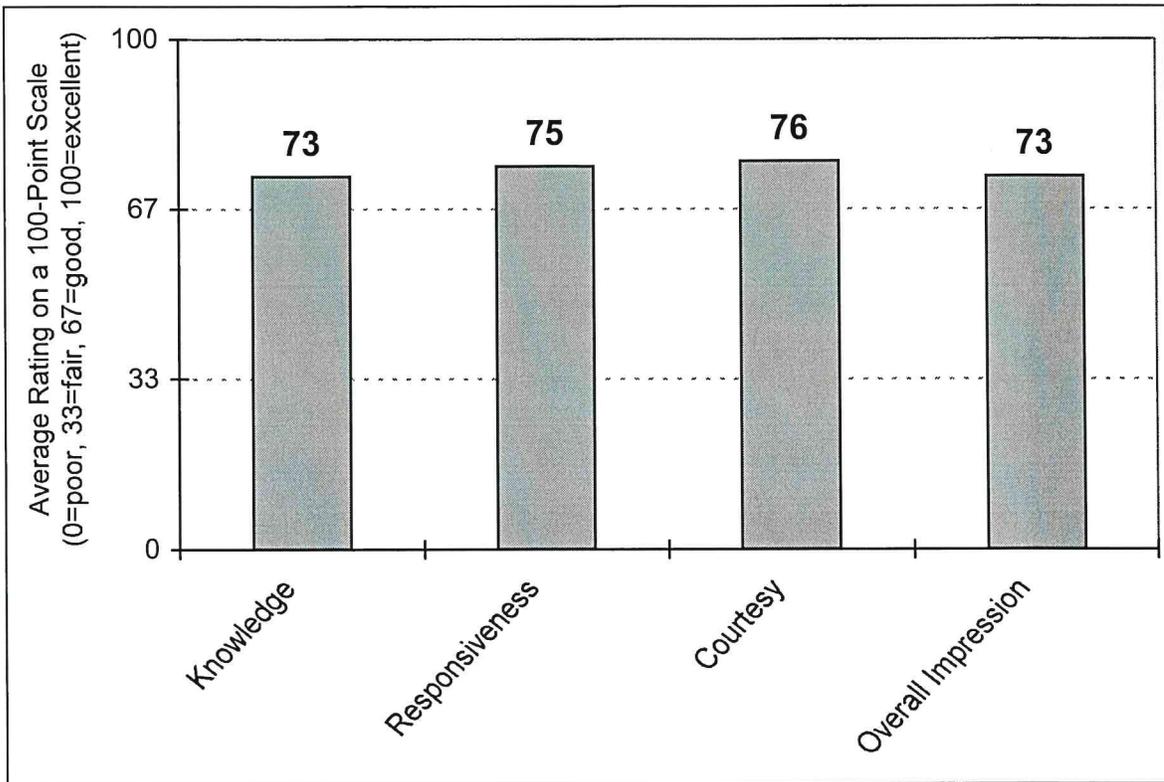


Figure 24b: Impression of Contact with Employees

	Percent of Respondents				
	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Knowledge	34%	54%	10%	2%	100%
Responsiveness	43%	42%	11%	4%	100%
Courtesy	48%	38%	9%	5%	100%
Overall Impression	41%	42%	14%	4%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed



ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Three additional questions were asked by Meridian Township. The results for these questions are displayed below.

Question #1: Level of support for options for constructing a new centrally located library facility						
	strongly support	somewhat support	neither support nor oppose	somewhat oppose	strongly oppose	Total
New library replacing current branches in Haslett and Okemos.	24%	21%	20%	18%	18%	100%
New library with current Haslett branch remaining open, Okemos branch closing, and the building sold.	15%	19%	27%	15%	25%	100%
Increased property taxes dedicated to paying for the new library facility.	13%	20%	16%	17%	34%	100%
Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed						

Question #2: Likelihood of voting to pay for more taxes in the following areas						
	very likely	somewhat likely	neither likely nor unlikely	somewhat unlikely	very unlikely	Total
Road repairs/maintenance.	17%	39%	17%	11%	15%	100%
Road enhancements such as pedestrian islands, roundabouts, and landscaped medians.	11%	21%	22%	21%	25%	100%
New, central library facility.	20%	24%	14%	15%	27%	100%
Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed						

Question #3: Level of support for various Cityhood options						
	strongly support	somewhat support	neither support nor oppose	somewhat oppose	strongly oppose	Total
Becoming a City, to gain control and responsibility for all streets except Grand River Avenue.	10%	31%	26%	16%	17%	100%
Becoming a City to protect our borders from annexation.	18%	31%	27%	11%	14%	100%
Becoming a City, with higher property taxing authority.	4%	14%	27%	25%	30%	100%
Retaining the current Township form of government.	26%	27%	37%	7%	4%	100%
Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed						



APPENDIX I: FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES TO ALL SURVEY QUESTIONS

Question #1: Quality of Life Ratings						
	excellent	good	fair	poor	don't know	Total
How do you rate Meridian Township as a place to live?	29%	62%	8%	0%	0%	100%
How do you rate your neighborhood as a place to live?	37%	51%	11%	1%	0%	100%
How do you rate Meridian Township as a place to raise children?	30%	46%	9%	0%	14%	100%
How do you rate Meridian Township as a place to retire?	13%	32%	24%	12%	19%	100%
How do you rate the overall quality of life in Meridian Township?	23%	66%	11%	0%	0%	100%

Question #2: Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Meridian Township as a whole						
	excellent	good	fair	poor	don't know	Total
Sense of community	8%	48%	32%	9%	4%	100%
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	14%	50%	24%	5%	7%	100%
Overall appearance of Meridian Township	17%	63%	18%	2%	0%	100%
Shopping opportunities	40%	43%	15%	2%	0%	100%
Recreational opportunities	17%	46%	29%	6%	2%	100%
Access to affordable quality housing	7%	31%	37%	19%	7%	100%
Ease of car travel in Meridian Township	15%	50%	27%	9%	0%	100%
Ease of bus travel in Meridian Township	8%	26%	13%	9%	43%	100%
Ease of bicycle travel in Meridian Township	8%	34%	24%	12%	21%	100%
Ease of walking in Meridian Township	17%	44%	29%	7%	3%	100%

Question #3: Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Meridian Township over the past two years							
	much too slow	somewhat too slow	right amount	somewhat too fast	much too fast	don't know	Total
Population growth	2%	7%	37%	23%	11%	19%	100%
Retail growth (stores, restaurants etc.)	4%	13%	35%	17%	23%	9%	100%
Jobs growth	8%	24%	21%	1%	1%	45%	100%

Question #4: To what degree are the following problems in Meridian Township						
	not a problem	minor problem	moderate problem	major problem	don't know	Total
Crime	15%	56%	15%	1%	13%	100%
Drugs	14%	32%	17%	4%	32%	100%
Too much growth	26%	19%	25%	21%	10%	100%
Lack of growth	57%	18%	10%	4%	11%	100%
Noise	37%	41%	14%	4%	4%	100%
Run down buildings, weed lots, or junk vehicles	43%	40%	9%	4%	3%	100%
Taxes	14%	22%	30%	20%	15%	100%
Traffic congestion	17%	33%	32%	17%	2%	100%
Unsupervised youth	31%	34%	13%	5%	18%	100%
Weeds	40%	41%	7%	3%	9%	100%

Question #5: Please rate how safe you feel from the following occurring to you in Meridian Township							
	very safe	somewhat safe	neither safe nor unsafe	somewhat unsafe	very unsafe	don't know	Total
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	51%	37%	8%	3%	0%	1%	100%
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	25%	49%	14%	9%	1%	2%	100%
Fire	46%	35%	12%	4%	1%	3%	100%

Question #6: Please rate how safe you feel:							
	very safe	somewhat safe	neither safe nor unsafe	somewhat unsafe	very unsafe	don't know	Total
In your neighborhood during the day	80%	17%	3%	1%	0%	0%	100%
In your neighborhood after dark	42%	46%	8%	3%	1%	0%	100%
In Meridian Township's downtown area during the day	71%	20%	5%	0%	0%	4%	100%
In Meridian Township's downtown area after dark	26%	49%	14%	4%	0%	7%	100%
In Meridian Township's parks during the day	59%	25%	5%	1%	0%	9%	100%
In Meridian Township's parks after dark	15%	30%	12%	14%	4%	26%	100%

Question #7: During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?		
		Percent of Respondents
During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?	no	88%
	yes	12%
	don't know	1%
Total		100%

Question #8: If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?		
		Percent of Respondents
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	no	34%
	yes	62%
	don't know	3%
Total		100%

Question #9: In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members done the following things in Meridian Township?						
	never	once or twice	3 to 12 times	13 to 26 times	more than 26 times	Total
Used Meridian Township public libraries or their services	38%	19%	23%	11%	9%	100%
Used Meridian Township recreation centers	44%	26%	21%	6%	3%	100%
Participated in a recreation program or activity	56%	22%	16%	5%	2%	100%
Visited a Meridian Township park	10%	33%	36%	13%	7%	100%
Ridden a local bus within Meridian Township	74%	7%	8%	4%	7%	100%
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	76%	16%	6%	0%	1%	100%
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	49%	22%	21%	5%	3%	100%
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	27%	11%	20%	15%	27%	100%
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Meridian Township	65%	16%	9%	4%	5%	100%
Read Meridian Township Newsletter	33%	35%	24%	4%	4%	100%
Used the Internet for anything	13%	2%	4%	6%	76%	100%
Used the Internet to conduct business with Meridian Township	84%	10%	2%	2%	2%	100%
Purchased an item over the Internet	26%	13%	37%	10%	14%	100%

Question #10: How do you rate the quality of each of the following services in Meridian Township?						
	excellent	good	fair	poor	don't know	Total
Police services	33%	49%	8%	2%	9%	100%
Fire services	34%	41%	3%	0%	22%	100%
Ambulance/emergency medical services	32%	34%	3%	0%	31%	100%
Crime prevention	22%	45%	12%	1%	19%	100%
Fire prevention and education	22%	35%	8%	1%	34%	100%
Traffic enforcement	22%	49%	16%	7%	7%	100%
Recycling	11%	30%	18%	17%	25%	100%
Street repair	4%	27%	42%	23%	4%	100%
Street cleaning	10%	34%	33%	13%	9%	100%
Snow removal	12%	44%	29%	12%	2%	100%
Sidewalk maintenance	9%	43%	28%	8%	13%	100%
Traffic signal timing	9%	47%	28%	14%	3%	100%
Storm drainage	14%	46%	20%	5%	15%	100%
Drinking water	35%	41%	15%	3%	6%	100%
Sewer services	25%	47%	10%	1%	17%	100%
Township parks	30%	49%	10%	2%	8%	100%
Recreation programs or classes	16%	35%	11%	2%	36%	100%
Range/variety of recreation programs and classes	17%	33%	18%	2%	29%	100%
Accessibility of parks	32%	49%	11%	1%	7%	100%
Accessibility of recreation centers/facilities	21%	42%	13%	2%	21%	100%
Appearance/maintenance of parks	28%	53%	10%	1%	7%	100%
Land use, planning and zoning	6%	23%	27%	29%	15%	100%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	11%	38%	22%	6%	23%	100%
Economic development	8%	34%	27%	11%	19%	100%
Services to seniors	8%	24%	11%	2%	55%	100%
Services to low-income people	4%	15%	8%	10%	63%	100%
Public library services	19%	39%	12%	6%	25%	100%
Variety of library materials	13%	34%	18%	5%	29%	100%
Cable television	10%	33%	26%	13%	18%	100%

Question #11: Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by . . .						
	excellent	good	fair	poor	don't know	Total
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by Meridian Township?	16%	61%	16%	2%	4%	100%
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by the Federal Government?	7%	36%	32%	12%	13%	100%
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by the State Government?	6%	41%	32%	10%	10%	100%

Question #12: Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of Meridian Township within the last 12 months?		
		Percent of Respondents
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of Meridian Township within the last 12 months?	no	46%
	yes	54%
Total		100%

Question #13: What was your impression of the employees of Meridian Township in your most recent contact?						
	excellent	good	fair	poor	don't know	Total
Knowledge	33%	53%	10%	2%	2%	100%
Responsiveness	43%	42%	11%	4%	1%	100%
Courtesy	48%	38%	9%	5%	0%	100%
Overall Impression	41%	42%	14%	4%	0%	100%

Question #14: Please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements.							
	strongly agree	somewhat agree	neither agree nor disagree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree	don't know	Total
I receive good value for Meridian Township taxes I pay	10%	39%	19%	9%	6%	17%	100%
I am pleased with the overall direction that Meridian Township is taking	10%	34%	19%	25%	5%	7%	100%
Meridian Township government welcomes citizen involvement	11%	31%	20%	8%	4%	26%	100%
Meridian Township government listens to citizens	7%	24%	20%	16%	6%	27%	100%

Question #15: What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months?		
		Percent of Respondents
What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be:	very positive	3%
	somewhat positive	17%
	neutral	45%
	somewhat negative	31%
	very negative	4%
Total		100%

Question #16a: District library options							
	strongly support	somewhat support	neither support nor oppose	somewhat oppose	strongly oppose	don't know	Total
New library replacing current branches in Haslett and Okemos.	22%	19%	18%	17%	16%	8%	100%
New library with current Haslett branch remaining open, Okemos branch closing, and the building sold.	13%	17%	24%	14%	22%	10%	100%
Increased property taxes dedicated to paying for the new library facility.	12%	19%	15%	16%	31%	7%	100%

Question #16b: Likelihood of paying more taxes for roads and/or library facility							
	very likely	somewhat likely	neither likely nor unlikely	somewhat unlikely	very unlikely	don't know	Total
Road repairs/maintenance.	17%	38%	17%	11%	15%	3%	100%
Road enhancements such as pedestrian islands, roundabouts, and landscaped medians.	10%	20%	21%	21%	24%	4%	100%
New, central library facility.	19%	23%	14%	14%	26%	5%	100%

Question #16c: Level of support for Cityhood options							
	strongly support	somewhat support	neither support nor oppose	somewhat oppose	strongly oppose	don't know	Total
Becoming a City, to gain control and responsibility for all streets except Grand River Avenue.	8%	25%	21%	13%	13%	20%	100%
Becoming a City to protect our borders from annexation.	14%	25%	22%	9%	11%	19%	100%
Becoming a City, with higher property taxing authority.	3%	11%	23%	20%	25%	18%	100%
Retaining the current Township form of government.	21%	21%	30%	5%	3%	19%	100%

Question #17: Do you live within the Township limits of Meridian Township?		
		Percent of Respondents
Do you live within the limits of Meridian Township?	no	3%
	yes	97%
Total		100%

Question #18: Employment Status		
		Percent of Respondents
Are you currently employed?	no	22%
	yes	78%
Total		100%

Question #18a: Usual Mode of Transportation to Work		
		Percent of Employed Respondents
What one method of transportation do you usually use (for the longest distance of your commute) to travel to work?	Motorized vehicle	93%
	Bus, Rail, Subway, or other public transportation	2%
	Walk	1%
	Work at home	2%
	Other	1%
Total		100%

Question #18b: Drive Alone or Carpool		
		Percent of Employed Respondents
If you checked the motorized vehicle (e.g. car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc.) box in 18a, do other people usually ride with you to or from work?	no	86%
	yes	14%
Total		100%

Usual Mode of Transportation to Work, Including Carpooling		
		Percent of Employed Respondents
Usual mode of transportation to work	Motorized vehicle, no others (SOV)	81%
	Motorized vehicle, with others (MOV)	13%
	Bus, rail, subway, or other public transportation	2%
	walk	1%
	work at home	2%
	other	1%
Total		100%

Question #19: Length of Residency		
		Percent of Respondents
How many years have you lived in Meridian Township?	less than 2 years	21%
	2-5 years	20%
	6-10 years	17%
	11-20 years	19%
	more than 20 years	23%
Total		100%

Question #20: Type of Housing Unit		
		Percent of Respondents
Which best describes the building you live in?	one family house detached from any other houses	55%
	one family house attached to one or more houses	4%
	building with two or more apartments or condominiums	39%
	other	2%
Total		100%

Question #21: Tenure Status		
		Percent of Respondents
Is this house, apartment, or mobile home...	rented for cash or occupied without cash payment?	38%
	owned by you or someone in this house	62%
Total		100%

Question #22: Presence of Children in Household		
		Percent of Respondents
Do any children age 12 or under live in your household?	no	76%
	yes	24%
Total		100%

Question #23: Presence of Teenagers in Household		
		Percent of Respondents
Do any teenagers ages 13 through 17 live in your household?	no	82%
	yes	18%
Total		100%

Question #24: Presence of Senior Adults in Household		
		Percent of Respondents
Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?	no	83%
	yes	17%
Total		100%

Question #25: Presence of Persons with Disabilities in Household		
		Percent of Respondents
Does any member of your household have a physical handicap or is anyone disabled?	no	87%
	yes	13%
Total		100%

Question #26: Education		
		Percent of Respondents
What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?	12th Grade or less, no diploma	3%
	high school diploma	5%
	some college, no degree	15%
	associate's degree (e.g. AA, AS)	6%
	bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, AB, BS)	34%
	graduate degree or professional degree	37%
Total		100%

Question #27: Annual Household Income		
		Percent of Respondents
How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year?	less than \$24,999	17%
	\$25,000 to \$49,999	25%
	\$50,000 to \$99,999	35%
	\$100,000 or more	23%
Total		100%

Question #28: Ethnicity		
		Percent of Respondents
Are you Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?	no	97%
	yes	3%
Total		100%

Question #29: Race		
		Percent of Respondents
What is your race?	American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%
	Asian or Pacific Islander	4%
	Black, African American	2%
	White/Caucasian	89%
	Other	2%
	Multi-Racial	1%
Total		100%

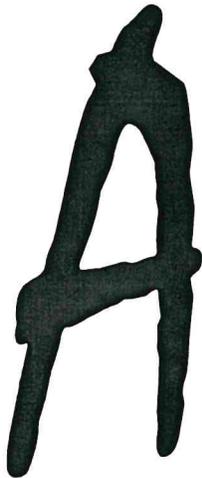
Question #30: Age		
		Percent of Respondents
In which category is your age?	18-24 years	11%
	25-34 years	22%
	35-44 years	13%
	45-54 years	28%
	55-64 years	11%
	65-74 years	7%
	75 years or older	7%
Total		100%

Question #31: Gender		
		Percent of Respondents
What is your gender?	Female	53%
	Male	47%
Total		100%

Question #32: Voter Registration Status		
		Percent of Respondents
Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?	no	10%
	yes	89%
	don't know	1%
Total		100%

Question #33: Vote in Last Election?		
		Percent of Respondents
Did you vote in the last election?	no	22%
	yes	78%
	don't know	0%
Total		100%

Question #34: Likely to Vote in Next Election?		
		Percent of Respondents
Are you likely to vote in the next election?	no	6%
	yes	88%
	don't know	6%
Total		100%



APPENDIX II: SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The National Citizen Survey™ was developed to provide local jurisdictions an accurate, affordable and easy way to assess and interpret resident opinion about important community issues. While standardization of question wording and survey methods provide the rigor to assure valid results, each jurisdiction has enough flexibility to construct a customized version of The National Citizen Survey™ that asks residents about key local services and important local issues.

Results offer insight into residents' perspectives about local government performance and as such provide important benchmarks for jurisdictions working on performance measurement. The National Citizen Survey™ is designed to help with budget, land use and strategic planning as well as to communicate with local residents. The National Citizen Survey™ permits questions to test support for local policies and answers to its questions also speak to community trust and involvement in community-building activities as well as to resident demographic characteristics.

SAMPLING

Approximately 1,200 households were selected to participate in the survey using a stratified systematic sampling method.³ An individual within each household was selected using the birthday method.⁴

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Households received three mailings between the 19th of May and the 6th of June 2003. The first was a postcard notifying them they had been selected to participate in Meridian Township 2003 Citizen Survey. The postcard was signed by the Township Supervisor. About a week later a survey was mailed with a cover letter also signed by the Township Supervisor. Approximately one week after the first survey was mailed, a second survey was mailed, with a cover letter

³ Systematic sampling is a method that closely approximates random sampling by selecting every Nth address until the desired number of households is chosen.

⁴ The birthday method is a process to remove bias in the selection of a person within the household by asking the "person whose birthday has most recently passed" to complete the questionnaire. The underlying assumption in this method is that day of birth has no relationship to the way people respond to surveys but leaving selection of respondent to household members will lead to bias.

asking those who had not yet participated to do so, while informing those who had already completed the survey not to do so again.

RESPONSE RATE AND CONFIDENCE INTERVALS

Of the 1,200 eligible households, 429 completed the survey providing a response rate of 38%. Approximately 66 addresses sampled were “vacant” or “not found.”⁵ In general, the response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% 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 is generally no greater than plus or minus 5 percentage points around any given percent reported.⁶ The confidence intervals are larger around estimates for subgroups.

WEIGHTING AND ANALYZING THE DATA

The surveys were analyzed using the SPSS statistical package. Frequency distributions and average (mean) ratings are presented in the body of the report.

The demographic characteristics of the sample were compared to those of Meridian Township as reflected in the information sent by staff to National Research Center, Inc. When necessary, survey results were statistically adjusted to reflect the known population profile.

Generally, only two variables are used in a weighting scheme. Known population characteristics are compared to the characteristics of survey respondents. Generally, characteristics chosen as weighting variables are selected because they are not in proportion to what is shown in a jurisdiction's demographic profile and because differences in opinion are observed between subgroups of these characteristics. The two socioeconomic characteristics that were used to weight the survey results were gender/age and tenure. Other discrepancies between the

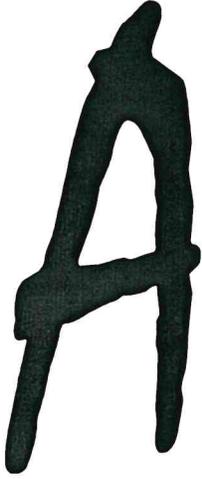
⁵ “Eligible” households refer to addresses that belong to residences that are not vacant within Meridian Township.

⁶ The margin of error was calculated using the following formula: $1.96 * \text{square root } (0.25/400)$. This margin of error is calculated in the most conservative way. The standard error was assumed to be the greatest for a binomial distribution: 50%/50%.

whole population and the sample were also aided by the weighting due to the intercorrelation of many socioeconomic characteristics, although the percentages are not always identical in the sample compared to the population norms. The results of the weighting scheme are presented in the table on the next page.

Weighting Scheme for Meridian Township Citizen Survey			
Respondent Characteristics	Population Norm*	Unweighted Survey Data	Weighted Survey Data
Tenure			
Rent Home	38%	27%	38%
Own Home	62%	75%	62%
Type of Housing Unit			
Single-Family Detached	55%	61%	56%
Attached	45%	34%	44%
Ethnicity			
Non-Hispanic	97.5%	98%	97%
Hispanic	2.5%	2%	3%
Race			
White/Caucasian	88%	89%	89%
Non-White	12%	11%	11%
Gender			
Female	53%	55%	53%
Male	47%	45%	47%
Age			
18-34	34%	20%	34%
35-54	41%	44%	41%
55+	25%	36%	25%
Gender and Age			
Females 18-34	17%	13%	17%
Females 35-54	22%	24%	22%
Females 55+	14%	20%	14%
Males 18-34	17%	8%	17%
Males 35-54	19%	20%	19%
Males 55+	11%	17%	11%

* Source: 2000 Census



APPENDIX III: SURVEY MATERIALS

The following pages contain copies of the survey materials sent to randomly selected households within Meridian Township. All households selected for inclusion in the study were first sent a prenotification postcard informing them that they would be receiving a questionnaire within the following week. A week later, a cover letter and survey were sent, with a postage paid return envelope. Two weeks later a second cover letter and survey were sent. The second cover letter asked that those who had responded not do so again, while urging those who had not yet returned their surveys to please do so.