



# Proposed Community and Senior Center Frequently Asked Questions

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**UPDATE 6/24/25: Questions 22 through 30 were added to the FAQ document on June 17. Questions 31 through 34 were added to the FAQ document on June 24 after receiving additional input from residents at the June 17 Township Board meeting. New questions will be shown in red.**

## **1. What is the proposed Meridian Township Community and Senior Center?**

The Community and Senior Center would provide amenities and programming for people of all ages. The Community Center would feature a gymnasium designed for pickleball, volleyball, basketball leagues, camps, drop-in programs, and preschool sports clinics. The gymnasium would also be available for rental for private events when not programmed for athletics.

Community meeting spaces would be available to rent by residents and a wide range of organizations, including nonprofits, homeowner associations, service groups, sports clubs, fraternities and sororities, and municipal events. There would be a large multi-purpose room that includes a stage and warming kitchen that could be used to host a wide range of events, including wedding receptions, graduation parties, birthday parties, etc.

A dedicated senior center area would offer the same amenities currently available at the Meridian Senior Center, including a warming kitchen, exercise space, library, movie and fireplace lounge, and activity rooms. Additional features would include a billiards and table tennis room, a wellness room for massage and reflexology, and accessible restrooms.

## **2. Why is the Community Center and Senior Center being proposed now?**

The current Meridian Senior Center, located in Chippewa Middle School (CMS), is scheduled to be demolished in 2027 as part of the Okemos Public Schools reconstruction project. This closure of the current Senior Center necessitates a new location.

## **3. How was the proposal developed?**

The Township Board established a [goal in 2023 and 2024](#) to examine enhancing senior programming. In 2023, this goal evolved into determining the feasibility of a multi-generational Community and Senior Center. A work group including staff and Township Board members evaluated various options in 2023 and 2024.

The Township Board then appointed a [Senior/Community Center Task Force](#) that worked from September 2024 to March 2025. The task force evaluated multiple site options and building configurations, resulting in two recommendations to the Township Board. One recommendation was for a senior center only, and the other was for a combined community and senior center. The Task Force's materials, including agendas, minutes, and meeting videos [are available online by clicking here](#).

At the May 8, 2025 meeting, the Township Board voted to proceed with a combined Community and Senior Center proposal. The Board voted to adopt a resolution to place before voters facility bond option 4a (construction of the new center), which passed with a vote of 4-3. The Board also voted to place before voters a 10-year operating millage for option 4a, which passed with a vote of 5-2. Links to the meeting packet, minutes, and recording from May 8 can be found on the next page:

- [May 8, 2025 Township Board Meeting Packet \(Page 92\)](#)
- [May 8, 2025 Township Board Meeting Minutes](#)
- [May 8, 2025 Township Board Meeting Recording](#)

**4. Where would the new Community and Senior Center be located?**

The facility would be constructed between the Township’s Central Fire Station (No. 91) and the Okemos U.S. Post Office along Central Park Drive, just east of Okemos Road. The Township owns this land, which was originally purchased for construction of a community building. The property is centrally located in the Central Park Drive corridor in the Township and has access to CATA bus routes and space for ample parking.

**5. How would the project be funded?**

The Township has secured a \$5 million grant from the State of Michigan to help fund the construction. State grant funds must be fully expended by the Township by September 30, 2026.

Additionally, Meridian Township residents would vote on two millages during the August 5, 2025 special election. The new millages include the construction bond proposal (0.5576 mill) and an operating millage (0.3475 mill). If passed, the total millage rate increase would be 0.9051 mill.

**6. If the millages pass, how much would I be expected to pay as a property owner?**

The average taxable value of single-family detached homes in Meridian Township is \$152,197. A home with this average value would pay \$138 per year. The average value of condominiums is \$91,599. A condominium with this average value would pay \$83 per year.

You can calculate exactly how much you would pay by looking up your current taxable value, dividing it by 1,000, and multiplying it by 0.9051:

$$\text{Taxable Value}/1000 * 0.9051 = \text{millage cost per year}$$

How to Look Up Your Taxable Value:

- To look up your current taxable value, visit [bsaonline.com/?uid=1274](https://bsaonline.com/?uid=1274)
- Enter your address and hit *Search*
- Select your address
- Scroll down to the *General Information for Tax Year 2025* tab
- Look at the amount in the *Taxable Value* row

The following table shows approximately how much property owners would pay annually under these two millages. Please note that taxable value is often less than half of market value and cannot exceed 50% of market value. Therefore, the following figures would be the most a property owner would pay under these two millages. Most property owners would pay less than the figures shown on the following page:

<b>Market Value of Home</b>	<b>Taxable Value of Home</b>	<b>Annual Increase to Property Tax Bill</b>
\$200,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$91
\$250,000.00	\$125,000.00	\$113
\$300,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$136
\$350,000.00	\$175,000.00	\$158
\$400,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$181
\$450,000.00	\$225,000.00	\$204
\$500,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$226
\$550,000.00	\$275,000.00	\$249
\$600,000.00	\$300,000.00	\$272

**7. When would the millages start and how long would they last?**

If approved by voters, the millages would start on the December 2025 tax bill. The bond millage is planned for 20 years. The length of the bond millage could be shorter if taxable value growth exceeds the estimated annual increase of one percent (1%). The operating millage is for 10 years and would require additional voter approval to renew it past 2034.

**8. What happens if one millage passes and the other fails?**

The millage proposals are written so that if one passes and the other fails, neither one can take effect. For example, if the operating millage passes and the bond millage fails, the Township could not levy the operating millage. Similarly, if the bond millage passes and the operating millage fails, the Township could not levy the bond millage.

**9. How much would the project cost to build?**

The current construction estimate for the project is \$24 million. The cost estimate includes site preparation, infrastructure, building construction, and furnishings. These costs do not include land acquisition since the Township already owns the property.

**10. How much would the facility cost to operate?**

Staff have done an extensive analysis of how much the facility would cost to run. Annual operating costs are estimated to be approximately \$1.1 million for the building, including long term planning for standard maintenance items, staffing needs, and basic operating costs (utilities, cleaning supplies, etc.). The estimate of operating costs does not include potential offsets from user fees and rental revenue.

**11. When would the new center be open if the funding is approved?**

If voters pass the millages, the funding is approved in August, and the new center could potentially open in early 2028. The Township is attempting to avoid any gaps in available senior center space.

**12. If the proposal for a new Senior and Community Center fails, would the Township be able to still replace the existing Senior Center?**

The cost to construct a new Senior Center at a comparable size to the existing center is approximately \$9.8 million, which exceeds the Township's \$5 million grant and would require a funding source, whether external support, new millage, or otherwise. Okemos Public Schools does not have the funds or available space to construct a Senior Center.

At the existing Senior Center at Chippewa Middle School, the Township only pays the wages and benefits of one full-time and one part-time employee. Okemos Public Schools has historically paid for the operation and maintenance of the existing Senior Center. Therefore, the Township would require additional operating and maintenance revenue to fund a new Senior Center.

**13. How far along is the design, and was resident input part of the design process?**

The design is only conceptual at this point, but the Township would not be able to add additional space because the funding provided by the millages is based on the size of the conceptual design. The exception to that is if the Township can raise additional funds from private and philanthropic sources.

[Please click here to view conceptual plans of the proposed center.](#) The conceptual plans were updated on June 17 to include additional details of what the proposed center would look like.

The Township included questions on the 2024 tri-annual survey, which is a statistically valid survey of a random sample of Township residents, to get input that could be used to design the center.

[Please click here to review the 2024 tri-annual survey results.](#)

The Township also held two public meetings in July 2024 to garner public input on the design. The Task Force also met seven times between September 24, 2024, and March 11, 2025, to receive input from the public.

If voters approve the two millage proposals, the full design would have to be completed in a timely manner as the \$5 million grant from the state of Michigan must be expended by September 30, 2026. The schedule would tentatively proceed as follows:

- August 5, 2025: Election Day
- January-February 2026: Full Design Completed
- March-April 2026: Bidding for Construction
- April-July 2026: Break Ground for Construction

**14. What is the cost of membership for the current Senior Center, and would this change with the new facility?**

The **annual** membership fees for the existing Senior Center are:

- \$25 for single Meridian Township Resident

- \$35 for a couple who are Meridian Township Residents
- \$35 for Single Non-Resident
- \$45 for Couple Non-Residents

Additional fees for health and wellness services, fitness classes, and special events are expected to remain consistent with the current structure. All Township fees are subject to change by the Township Board during the annual budget process.

### **15. Would there be fees to use the gymnasium and multi-purpose space?**

The gymnasium is expected to be used for sports leagues, open gym, and special events. Basketball, volleyball, and pickleball leagues would follow the current Parks and Recreation Department fee structure, typically ranging from \$50 to \$100 per league. Open gym access would be available on a daily, monthly, or annual basis, with fees varying from \$5 to \$150 depending on frequency and duration.

The multi-purpose meeting space is anticipated to host a variety of events, including fitness classes, community meetings, and special gatherings. Rental fees are expected to range from \$50 to \$150 per hour, depending on the type of event and the duration of use.

All Township fees are subject to change by the Township Board during the annual budget process.

### **16. Where can I learn more about the proposal?**

To learn more about the proposal, please visit [www.meridian.mi.us/Center](http://www.meridian.mi.us/Center).

### **17. Who can vote on the proposal, and where and when can I vote?**

All qualified, verified, and registered voters in Meridian Township can vote on these millages. To check where you are currently registered to vote, change your voter registration, find your polling location, or view sample ballots, please visit [www.michigan.gov/vote](http://www.michigan.gov/vote). Information about early voting, how to return your absentee ballot, and overseas/military voting can be found at [www.meridian.mi.us/vote](http://www.meridian.mi.us/vote).

### **18. Will there be early voting offered?**

Before Election Day on Tuesday, August 5, all qualified, verified, and registered voters in Meridian Township will have the opportunity to vote early at an in-person location.

Early voting for the August 5 special election will take place from Friday, August 1 through Sunday, August 3. Residents can vote from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm on all three days. The early voting site is located in the Town Hall Room of the Meridian Township Municipal Building (5151 Marsh Road, Okemos).

An early voting site operates similarly to a polling location that voters would use on Election Day. Early voters will be issued a ballot where they will cast their vote and insert it into the tabulator. Voters can also insert their absentee ballots into the vote tabulator at the early voting site.

For questions about early voting, please contact the Meridian Township Clerk's office at 517.853.4300 or [clerksoffice@meridian.mi.us](mailto:clerksoffice@meridian.mi.us).

**19. Where can I find information about the election?**

For more information about the upcoming election, please visit:

- [www.michigan.gov/vote](http://www.michigan.gov/vote)
- [www.meridian.mi.us/vote](http://www.meridian.mi.us/vote)

**20. Who can I contact for questions about the proposed Community and Senior Center?**

For all questions regarding the proposed Community and Senior Center, please contact [center@meridian.mi.us](mailto:center@meridian.mi.us) or 517.853.4258.

**21. What is the ballot language for this proposal?**

**MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY AND SENIOR CENTER OPERATING MILLAGE**

For the purposes of funding expansions and improvements to existing senior center services and operation and maintenance of a new community and senior center and related improvements and services, shall the Constitutional limitation upon the total amount of taxes which may be assessed in one (1) year upon all property within the Charter Township of Meridian be increased and a new additional millage of up to 0.3475 mill (\$0.3475 per \$1,000 of taxable value) be levied for the period of ten (10) years (2025-2034) inclusive? If approved and levied in full, this Millage will raise an estimated \$813,487 in the first calendar year of the levy of which a portion may be disbursed to local tax increment financing authorities such as the Meridian Township Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. Adoption of this proposal is conditioned on adoption of the Township Community and Senior Center Project Bond proposal at this election.

Yes \_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_

**MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY AND SENIOR CENTER PROJECT BOND**

For the purposes of paying the cost of constructing a new community and senior center facility, including, but not limited to the cost of acquiring, designing, constructing, furnishing and equipping this, and related improvements, parking and site improvements, shall the Charter Township of Meridian, Ingham County, Michigan, borrow a principal amount not to exceed \$19,415,000 and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds for all or a portion of that amount in one or more series payable over not to exceed 20 years from the date of issue of each series? Adoption of this proposal is conditioned on adoption of the Township Community and Senior Center Operating millage at this election.

The estimated millage to be levied in the first year of the levy is 0.5576 mill (\$0.5576 per \$1,000 of taxable value) and the estimated simple average annual millage rate required to retire the bonds over approximately 20 years is 0.5568 mill (\$0.5568 per \$1,000 of taxable value).

Yes \_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_

**22. Were other sites, such as the Meridian Mall, considered?**

Yes, other sites were considered, including sites inside the Meridian Mall and undeveloped sites around the Meridian Mall.

The initial work group referenced in **question 3**, which included Township staff and Board members, evaluated various options in 2023 and 2024. This work group ultimately developed a proposal to purchase the former Younker’s anchor store at the Meridian Mall and renovate it into a Community and Senior Center. However, that proposal was going to require a larger property tax millage, as there were costs associated with acquiring the land. Additionally, the former Younker’s store is approximately 95,000 square feet, which is larger than the Township needs.

The current plan before voters at the August 5 special election does not require land acquisition costs since the Township already owns the land. The two millage proposals would construct a facility that is 39,593 square feet. That represents a 58% reduction in facility size compared to the Younker’s space, which would also lower the operating costs for the facility.

The most recent Task Force also considered 10 different sites. To view those sites, please visit page 17 of the [October 22, 2024 Senior/Community Center Task Force packet](#).

**23. What other restrictions does the State grant have?**

As discussed in **question 5**, the most significant restriction is the deadline to expend the funds by September 30, 2026. The State grant can be used to acquire land and construct a community center, a senior center, or a combined center, as proposed. According to the conditions of the State grant, the Township must either own the property or have a leasehold interest in the property for at least 50 years.

However, all options involving leases carry the risk of the center being displaced with little notice to the Township. This concern is particularly relevant given the upcoming demolition of Chippewa Middle School, which the Township is currently addressing. The only way to ensure that the center remains secure and is not displaced is for the Township to own both the land and the facility.

The appropriation language in the state budget is as follows:

*Sec. 558. (1) From the funds appropriated in part 1 for ARP - senior centers, the department shall allocate \$5,000,000.00 to a charter township with a population of between 40,000 and 50,000 in a county with a population of between 280,000 and 290,000 according to the most recent federal decennial census to construct a new senior and community center.*

*(2) Unexpended funds appropriated in part 1 for ARP - senior centers are designated as a work project appropriation. Unencumbered or unallotted funds shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year and shall be available for expenditure until the project has been completed. The following is in compliance with section 451a of the management and budget act, 1984 PA 431, MCL 18.1451a:*

*(a) The purpose of the project is to construct a new senior and community center.*

*(b) The project will be accomplished by utilizing state employees or contracts with service providers, or both.*

*(c) The total estimated cost of the project is \$5,000,000.00.*

*(d) The tentative completion date is September 30, 2026.*

#### **24. Could the debt or operating millages ever be reduced?**

Yes, both millages could potentially be reduced under certain circumstances.

For the debt millage, if the growth in taxable value within the Township exceeds the projected 1% growth, which it has historically done, then revenue will be generated faster than projected. This allows for the possibility of paying down the fixed amount of principal debt earlier than 20 years.

For example, this scenario occurred with the Central Fire Station debt millage (0.2 mill), which was originally projected to be levied for the last time on the December 2027 tax bill. Because the growth in the Township's taxable value exceeded initial projections, the Central Fire Station debt millage was levied for the last time on the December 2024 tax bill at a rate of 0.0624 mill, three years ahead of schedule.

For the operating millage, there is a possibility that it could be lowered during the Township Board's annual budget approval process. If revenue generated by user fees from the proposed center is sufficient to cover a portion of the annual operating expenses, the Board could decide to lower the millage rate. The Township Board has approved an operating millage that could fund all operating costs of the center, keeping the option open for a very low fee structure. However, no decision has been made regarding a potential fee structure at this time.

#### **25. How big is the proposed Senior Center component compared to the existing center at Chippewa Middle School?**

The existing Senior Center is approximately 8,000 square feet. **Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Senior Center had approximately 9,530 square feet of usable space.** The Senior Center portion of the Community and Senior Center is approximately 11,540 square feet.

#### **26. Did the Township consider partnering with any neighboring jurisdictions to operate a jointly owned center?**

Several community and senior centers across Michigan were examined to learn about programing, fee structures, operating expenses, and related issues. However, the Township did not discuss partnering with neighboring jurisdictions to form a jointly operated facility.

Many of the neighboring jurisdictions already have existing centers. Therefore, it would likely require the Township to invest in a facility that is not located in the Township. The Township has not explored if this would be legally permissible to invest millage funds in a facility located outside the Township.

**27. Has the Township considered private development and/or management of a Community and Senior Center?**

Private development and management are not financially feasible alternatives to a publicly owned and operated center. Community and senior centers offer a public service that relies on property tax revenue to keep user fees affordable for all. Private operators would need to charge fees at a level that would not be competitive with other public centers and would exclude a large percentage of potential users due to the cost of the user fees.

**28. How will operations be funded after the 10-year operating bond expires?**

While the revenue generated by fees may help offset some of the operating expenses, they will not cover all the operating costs under any reasonable fee structure. The Township would need the millage to be renewed and/or explore using the Township General Fund to help support the operating costs of the facility.

**29. Besides the \$24 million in construction costs, what are the other expenses?**

Interest and bond financing costs for the construction of the proposed center are estimated to be \$10.4 million over twenty years. As stated in **question 10**, annual operating costs would be just over \$1.1 million per year, or \$11.4 million over ten years.

The following tables show the full costs:

<b>Operating Costs</b>				
<b>Existing Community Services Millage Revenue</b>	<b>Existing Community Services Millage Fund Balance</b>	<b>Revenue from the Proposed Operating Millage</b>	<b>Proposed Operating Millage Rate</b>	<b>Estimated Total Operating Funds Over First 10 Years</b>
\$2,105,051	\$550,000	\$8,706,529	0.3475	<b>\$11,361,580</b>

<b>Bond Financing, Interest and Construction Costs</b>					
<b>State of Michigan Grant to help fund Construction</b>	<b>Remaining Construction Funds from the Proposed Bond Millage</b>	<b>Estimated Bond Financing Costs</b>	<b>Estimated Interest Costs</b>	<b>Proposed Project Bond Millage Rate</b>	<b>Estimated Total Debt Service, Interest and Construction Costs</b>
\$5,000,000	\$19,000,000	\$415,000	\$10,056,476	0.5576	<b>\$34,471,476</b>

<b>Estimated Total Funds Over the First 10 Years</b>	<b>Total Proposed Millage Rate Increase</b>
<b>\$45,833,056</b>	<b>0.9051</b>

**30. What percentage of the property taxes that we pay go to the Township?**

About 20% of the property taxes paid by Township property owners are used to support Township services. The remaining 80% is distributed to schools, CATA, Ingham County, and other public services that rely on property tax funding. For a visual representation of how tax dollars are allocated, please click the link below:

[Meridian Township Tax Bill Summary](#)

**31. If voters approve the proposed millages, will the regular programming offered at the current Meridian Senior Center still be offered at the new location? What programming is currently offered at the Meridian Senior Center?**

Yes, if voters approve the proposed millages, the current Meridian Senior Center programming will still be offered at the new location. An overview of that programming is as follows:

- **Arts and Crafts:** Includes painting, seasonal projects, and other creative activities.
- **Community Outreach and Educational Events:** Topics including Medicare, Alzheimer’s awareness, and presentations from organizations like the League of Women Voters.
- **Fitness and Exercise:** Activities include strength training, Tai Chi, Jazzercise, yoga, access to the fitness room, and walking groups.
- **Games and Recreation:** Activities such as table tennis, billiards, card games, puzzles, Mah Jong, and Bingo.
- **Health and Wellness Services:** Services like massage therapy, reflexology, and wellness-related workshops.
- **Library Access:** On-site library resources for reading and participation in book clubs.
- **Information and Resource Sharing:** Presentations and resources provided by partners like the Meridian Township Fire Department, memorial service providers, and aging support programs.
- **Personal Interest Activities:** Examples include the Capital Area District Libraries (CADL) Book Club and movie days.
- **Special Events:** Celebrations and outings such as Halloween parties, the Kentucky Derby, Tacos & Trivia, Hawaiian Luau, field trips, and monthly birthday celebrations.

### 32. If voters approve the proposed millages, will there be new or expanded Senior Center programming offered at the new location?

Yes, there may be new or expanded Senior Center programming offered at the new location. Potential programming is as follows:

- **Expanded Fitness Programming:** Accommodate growing demand for *Fitness Over 50* classes, and similar classes, offering more sessions and increasing participation. The *Fitness Over 50* programming is currently held at the Central Park Pavilion due to a lack of available in-door fitness space that can accommodate this program. This would allow the *Fitness Over 50*, and similar new programs, to be held all year, rather than seasonally from May to October.
- **Health and Nutrition Programs:** Topics may include healthy food access, balanced nutrition, weight management, diabetes prevention, and cooking demonstrations tailored to seniors.
- **Mental Health Services:** Programming such as grief counseling, anxiety and depression management, medication education, and group support sessions.
- **Increased Field Trip Opportunities:** More frequent and diverse field trips to cultural sites, nature areas, educational venues, and social events, helping to combat social isolation.
- **Intergenerational Programming:** Events and initiatives designed to bring seniors together with youth, fostering community connections and mutual learning.

### 33. Are there any new services/programs that would be offered at the proposed Community Center?

Yes, there would be new services/programs offered at the proposed Community Center. New programs are as follows:

- **Gymnasium Benefits and Current Gaps in Indoor Sports Facilities**
  - The addition of a gymnasium would allow Meridian Township Parks and Recreation to offer indoor sports programming that is currently unavailable due to a lack of facilities. This would enhance year-round recreational opportunities for residents of all ages.
- **Indoor Pickleball Courts**
  - Meridian Township currently does not offer indoor pickleball courts. An estimated 250 players regularly use the outdoor courts at Hillbrook Park and Towner Road Park. Indoor courts would allow for year-round play and serve the growing demand for this sport.
- **Indoor Volleyball Courts**
  - There are no indoor volleyball courts available through Meridian Township Parks and Recreation. Approximately 24 teams utilize the outdoor courts at Nancy C. Moore Park and North Meridian Park. Indoor courts would create opportunities for youth volleyball leagues and camps in which programming is currently not offered due to space limitations.
- **Indoor Basketball Courts**
  - Indoor basketball gym space is very limited. A partnership with Haslett Public Schools allows some access for recreational leagues, but gym space is extremely limited due to their own school and private league use. Okemos Public Schools is

unable to provide gym access for recreational programming, as their facilities are fully utilized by school leagues.

- **Meeting Space Demand**

- Meeting space is in high demand throughout the community. The Central Fire Community Room alone hosts more than 140 meetings annually, serving as a vital gathering space for a wide range of local organizations. Regular users include the Haslett-Okemos Rotary, Haslett-Okemos Kiwanis, League of Women Voters, Okemos Youth Football and Boosters, Meridian Garden Club, Corridor Improvement Authority, Downtown Development Authority, Girl Scouts, and numerous homeowner associations.
- This consistent usage reflects the need for additional public meeting spaces to support community engagement and collaboration.

### **34. Are there any potential new services/programs that may be offered that weren't mentioned in Question 33?**

Yes. The new Community Center would allow Meridian Township Parks and Recreation to introduce a variety of services and activities currently not offered due to space limitations. These expanded offerings would help meet the growing variety, interests and needs of residents across all age groups.

Potential new programs and services may include:

- **Youth and Adult Sports Camps and Clinics**

- Opportunities for skill development in basketball, volleyball, pickleball, and more offered year-round and led by trained staff or local coaches.

- **Enrichment Activities**

- A broad range of programs designed to foster creativity, personal growth, and community connections, including, arts and crafts classes, teen drop-in programs, study groups and tutoring sessions, STEM and hobby-based workshops.
- The availability of indoor, flexible, and dedicated space at the new facility would allow us to grow our programming and better serve the diverse interests of our community.