

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
AGENDA**

**WORK SESSION**

**APRIL 21, 2016**

**Town Hall Room  
Meridian Municipal Building  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864**

**Work Session Meeting**

1. Call meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.
2. Approval of agenda
3. Presentation
  - A. Meridian Township Master Plan Update  
McKenna Associates, Inc.  
Paul Lippens, Principal Planner  
Brian Keeseey, Senior Planner
4. Public Remarks
5. Adjournment

**PLEASE NOTE: A QUORUM OF THE TOWNSHIP BOARD MAY BE PRESENT AT  
THIS MEETING**

## **MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN**

### **MEETING #1 – PLANNING COMMISSION**

Thursday, 7:00 P.M. April 21, 2016  
Meridian Township Hall

#### **AGENDA**

- I. Review Accomplishments
  - A. Kick-off meeting
  - B. Project Schedule
  
- II. Review Master Plan Elements
  - A. Table of Contents
  - B. Discuss and Confirm Goals, Objectives and Vision Statement
  - C. Demographics
  - D. Existing Land Use
  
- III. Review Document Format and Graphics Examples
  
- IV. Next Steps
  - A. Working meeting with Township staff
  - B. Planning Commission meeting on May 23<sup>rd</sup>
  - C. Land Use Analysis (Continued)
  - D. Development Scenarios and PICA Analysis
  - E. Open Space and Urban Service Boundary Analysis
  - F. Revisions to Document Format and Graphics Examples

#### Attachments:

- Project Schedule
- Table of Contents (draft)
- 2015 Goals and Objectives (draft)
- Demographics Analysis (draft)
- Graphics Concept 1
- Graphics Concept 2
- Graphics Concept 3

## MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP PLAN UPDATE TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Date	Ongoing Task List
<p><b>PROJECT INITIATION</b></p> <p>March 10, 2016 Staff Kick Off #1</p>	<p><b>Master Plan Kick-off Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and approve the Master Plan schedule and process</li> <li>• Project protocols, data sharing and communications plan</li> <li>• Schedule notice of intent to plan</li> </ul>
<p><b>IDENTIFY QUANTIFY ANALYZE USABILITY AND FORMATTING</b></p> <p>Thursday April 21, 2016 Meeting #1 PC &amp; Board (Joint Meeting)</p> <p>Staff Working Meeting #2 (prep for May PC)</p>	<p><b>McKenna Presents:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing conditions inventory / land use</li> <li>• Demographics analysis / economic analysis</li> <li>• Goals, objectives, vision statement</li> <li>• Table of Contents</li> <li>• 3 Graphics / plan spreads / prototypes</li> <li>• Template mock-ups, chapter headings, table formats, rough sketches &amp; map formats</li> </ul>
<p><b>DEVELOPMENT DIRECTION</b></p> <p>May 23, 2016 Planning Commission Meeting #2</p> <p>Staff Working Meeting #3 (prep for June PC &amp; Board)</p>	<p><b>McKenna Presents:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development scenario / PICA analysis</li> <li>• Draft open space / service boundary / analysis</li> <li>• Revisions to plan mock-ups</li> </ul>
<p><b>DEVELOPMENT DIRECTION</b></p> <p>Thursday June 30, 2016 Meeting #3 PC &amp; Board (Joint Meeting)</p> <p>Staff Working Meeting #4 (prep for July PC)</p>	<p><b>McKenna Presents:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft future land use / analysis</li> <li>• Draft future transportation / analysis</li> <li>• Preliminary metrics</li> </ul>

<p><b>ACTION PLAN AND METRICS</b></p> <p>July 25, 2016 Planning Commission Meeting #4</p> <p>Staff Working Meeting #5 (prep for August PC)</p>	<p><b>McKenna Presents:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft strategic action plan</li> <li>• Revisions to preliminary metrics</li> <li>• Baseline assessment with targets / indicators / measures</li> </ul>
<p><b>DRAFT PLAN</b></p> <p>August 22, 2016 Planning Commission Meeting #5</p> <p>Staff Working Meeting #6 (prep for September PC)</p>	<p><b>McKenna Presents:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future land use plan</li> <li>• Priority redevelopment sites &amp; illustrations</li> <li>• Future transportation plan</li> <li>• Text, maps, and graphics</li> <li>• Zoning plan</li> <li>• Strategic action plan</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete draft Master Plan</li> </ul>
<p><b>FINAL PLAN</b></p> <p>September 19, 2016 Planning Commission Meeting #6 (Optional)</p>	<p><b>McKenna Presents:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised draft Master Plan</li> <li>• Strategic action plan</li> </ul> <p>* If Planning Commission approves the complete draft, they forward the Draft Plan to Township Board, asking Council to approve distribution of the draft to neighboring communities for comment</p>
<p><b>ADOPTION</b></p>	<p>The Township will lead the adoption process.</p> <p>McKenna Associates will be available to assist as needed.</p>

**Memorandum**

To: Meridian Township Planning Commission

Date: April 15, 2016

From: Paul Lippens, AICP, Principal Planner

**Subject: Master Plan – Table of Contents**

As part of the Township's Master Plan development, McKenna has prepared a draft Table of Contents, which will guide the flow of the document. The Table of Contents succinctly describes the organization and structure of the Master Plan. That organization directly impacts the document's effectiveness in communicating the community's intentions. Following is the preliminary outline.

1. Introduction
  - a. Township Overview
  - b. Legal Basis for Plan
2. Action Plan
  - a. Zoning Plan
  - b. Implementation Matrix
  - c. Metrics
3. Goals and Objectives
4. Future Land Use Plan
5. Future Transportation Plan
6. Existing Conditions Analysis
  - a. Demographics
  - b. Housing
  - c. Economic Analysis
  - d. Infrastructure/Transportation
  - e. Community Facilities
  - f. Land Use Analysis
    - i. Natural Features, Open Space
    - ii. Residential
    - iii. Commercial
    - iv. Industrial
    - v. PICAs (Potential Intensity Change Areas)
7. Appendix
  - a. Raw Data
  - b. Public Input Results

We look forward to discussing this information with you and incorporating your feedback.

Thank you.

**Memorandum**

To: Meridian Township Planning Commission

Date: April 15, 2016

From: Paul Lippens, AICP, Principal Planner

Subject: **Master Plan – Goals and Objectives (2015)**

The Goals and Objectives attached include a 2015 Goals and Objectives update completed by the Township and the results of a 2015 Public Input workshop conducted by Planning Commission. We would like to discuss this information to ensure that it reflects the current vision of Planning Commission.

We look forward to discussing this information with you and incorporating your feedback.

Thank you.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The fundamental statement of community values, the personal values, the values relating to government and the vision for the year 2020 provide the foundation upon which subsequent policy decisions in this Plan rests. To guide the formulation of specific policy decisions, the Planning Commission established a more detailed set of goals and objectives and strategies for pursuing them.

The Planning Commission presents the following set of specific goals, which are derived from the statements of community values (no priority is implied):

- *Goal 1:* Preserve and strengthen residential neighborhoods.
- *Goal 2:* Preserve open space and natural areas.
- *Goal 3:* Enhance the viability of Township businesses.
- *Goal 4:* Maintain and expand a diverse park system.
- *Goal 5:* Maintain essential public services.
- *Goal 6:* Provide and support an efficient, safe, and environmentally sensitive multi-modal transportation network.
- *Goal 7:* Promote efficient and sustainable growth principles.

For each of these goals, a series of objectives is stated, and for most of the objectives one or more strategies for achieving this objective are specified.

### **GOAL 1: PRESERVE AND STRENGTHEN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS**

#### **Objective A: Maintain a community of desirable, attractive residential neighborhoods.**

**Strategies:**

1. Prevent inconsistent uses from encroaching into residential areas.
2. Continue to support the designation and preservation of historic neighborhoods and residences.
3. Designate appropriate neighborhoods as special land use areas and adopt zoning specific to their needs.
4. Encourage cluster developments, mixed use and other compact residential choices closer to shopping, public transit and other services.
5. Ensure that the Future Land Use Map has a range of residential densities which will result in a diversity of housing that meets the needs of various income levels and household types.

**Objective B: Ensure new residential developments meet high standards of visual attractiveness, health and safety, and environmental sensitivity.**

**Strategies:**

1. Minimize erosion and the intrusion of roads, pathways, houses, and driveways into wetlands and floodplains in residential developments.
2. Continue to require the planting of trees along rights-of-way, and the replacement of trees when they are damaged, destroyed, or diseased.
3. Encourage residential design that enhances use of outdoor areas for recreation, community walkability and integration with public transit.
4. Lay out new residential developments to accommodate public transit, for example, by providing pedestrian connections to bus stops and by designing for curb side bus stops near entrances.
5. In all subdivisions and residential developments, encourage layouts which maintain maximum green space and/or common open space.

**GOAL 2: PRESERVE OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL AREAS**

**Objective A: Adopt policies and programs that maximize the preservation of open spaces, natural areas, other undeveloped areas and agricultural land uses in the Township.**

**Strategies:**

1. Continue to develop and implement Township policies regarding the protection of open space land and natural areas via zoning, the public purchase of land, conservation easements, development rights and other appropriate techniques.
2. Encourage landowners to donate natural areas or open spaces to the Township, and to place their properties under the protection of the Farmland and Open Space Preservation (Part 361) or the Conservation and Historic Preservation Easement (Part 21) of PA 451 of 1994 Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, where appropriate.
3. Encourage landowners to donate land or development rights to non-profit land trusts.
4. Continue to coordinate efforts with the Park Commission to support and promote the preservation of open space and environmentally sensitive lands in the Meridian recreation areas through donations of land with natural, open space and ecological and/or historical significance.
5. Preserve the ecological integrity of the Red Cedar River through zoning, voluntary agreements with landowners, donation of land to the Township, or the purchase of land, scenic easements, and development rights, where appropriate.
6. Develop a tree preservation ordinance to protect significant mature trees.
7. Work with the Park Commission, Department of Public Works and Engineering and the school districts, where appropriate, to encourage developers and

builders to maximize the amount of land left in a natural state as common open space.

**Objective B: Conserve wetlands, floodplains, and other water retention areas.**

**Strategies:**

1. Identify all wetlands, floodplains, and other water retention areas.
2. Continue to communicate and coordinate with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality on activities affecting lakes, streams, and wetlands.
3. Discourage development within wetlands, floodplains, floodplain fringe areas, and water retention areas.
4. Support the Environmental Commission's educational efforts to minimize infiltration of salt, fertilizer, herbicide, and pesticide.

**Objective C: Link open spaces and natural areas into a network of continuous greenways throughout the Township.**

**Strategies:**

1. Continue to use the Greenspace Plan as a guide for determining how natural areas can be linked into continuous greenways throughout the Township.
2. Work with the Land Preservation Board and Park Commission to continue the establishment of a continuous greenway along the Red Cedar River through the identification of additional parcels of land which are important to the ecological and visual integrity of the Red Cedar River.
3. Utilize land planning methods, purchases of land and development rights, and plat, site plan, and other review processes to create and maintain continuous greenways.
4. Encourage the Environmental Commission to develop educational programs about the importance of protecting endangered animals and plants, ecosystems and other unique or sensitive natural features.

**Objective D: Protect groundwater recharge areas in the Township.**

**Strategies:**

1. Support regional efforts to protect groundwater recharge areas.
2. Continue to educate citizens about the importance of protecting groundwater recharge areas.
3. Use zoning and other appropriate land management techniques to protect important groundwater recharge areas.

**Objective E: Preserve greenbelts, open spaces and natural areas and create pathways by encouraging the use of planned unit development or other suitable zoning strategies for new residential developments.**

### **GOAL 3: ENHANCE THE VIABILITY OF TOWNSHIP BUSINESSES**

#### **Objective A: Upgrade commercial areas.**

**Strategies:**

1. Participate in regional efforts to redevelop the Grand River corridor and incorporate results where appropriate.
2. Improve and enhance the Haslett Road commercial area while maintaining its traditional character.
3. Encourage redevelopment of the downtown Okemos area using the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Integrated Plan as a guide.
4. Evaluate opportunities for walkable urban design in commercial areas.
5. Encourage the use of the commercial planned unit development ordinance.
6. Identify specific areas where the form-based code technique may be appropriately applied.

#### **Objective B: Develop the Township's commercial core into a viable and vibrant district.**

**Strategies:**

1. Explore the viability of upper floor(s) residences in the commercial core.
2. Continue to engage the public in deciding the direction for development in the commercial core.
3. Explore options for public-private partnerships to revitalize the Township's commercial core.

#### **Objective C: Improve the attractiveness of the Township's entrances and transportation corridors.**

**Strategies:**

1. Investigate grant-based funding opportunities to improve landscaping along major thoroughfares.
2. Create well-designed entrances along the main roads entering the community.
3. Promote opportunities for public art.

#### **OBJECTIVE D: Promote economic development**

1. Communicate with and utilize the resources of the Economic Development Corporation, Downtown Development Authority, Meridian Area Business Association, and Meridian Asset Resource Center to encourage economic development.
2. Provide businesses with the information necessary to invest in the community.
3. Continue to adopt Township ordinances and zoning practices to facilitate efficient decision-making and to incorporate greater flexibility where appropriate.

## **GOAL 4: MAINTAIN AND EXPAND A DIVERSE PARK SYSTEM**

**Objective A: Continue to expand the Meridian Township park and recreational system to meet the recreational needs of residents into the future.**

**Strategies:**

1. Pursue acquisitions that target current and future demands of residents.
2. Employ acquisition strategies that leverage available dollars to secure maximum property for the value.
3. Support Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathway linkages to parks and recreation facilities.
4. Provide accessible facilities and leisure opportunities for persons of various physical and socio-economic capabilities.

**Objective B: Develop and support Meridian Township park development and recreation programming that is diverse, widely distributed, fiscally responsible, and represents community needs.**

**Strategies:**

1. Support the Park Commission's continuing efforts to pursue public input in determining park and recreation development needs.
2. Utilize cooperative methods of providing recreation facilities by working with local recreation associations, schools, businesses, neighborhood groups and associations to provide diverse recreation programs.
3. Increase coordination between the Township Board, Park Commission and Land Preservation Advisory Board to maximize the potential benefits and enhance stewardship of open space, natural areas and park lands.
4. Encourage developers to incorporate parks and recreation amenities in new developments to complement the efforts of the Park Commission.
5. Continue to promote fiscal responsibility through partnerships and collaborative opportunities, grant support, sponsorships and donations, and encouraging volunteerism.
6. Provide resources to maintain and develop a diverse parks and recreation system to maintain and develop a diverse parks and recreation system to deliver a high quality of life for our community residents and necessary support for maintenance and operation of these amenities.

## **GOAL 5: MAINTAIN ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES**

**Objective A: Ensure that any future growth is consistent with the Township's present or planned capacity for sewage treatment, public water, and other utility systems.**

**Strategies:**

1. Focus growth into an urban services district to ensure efficient and fiscally responsible use of public services.
2. Routinely assess the demands on the utility systems from developments to determine available capacity for future development based on demographics.
3. Routinely inventory water, sewer and other utility systems capacity.
4. Maintain and upgrade the infrastructure (water, sewers, roads, community facilities) of the Township through the Capital Improvements Program's systematic scheduling of infrastructure construction, maintenance, and renovation.
5. Continue to use Special Assessment Districts to finance infrastructure projects.
6. Incorporate appropriate recommendations from Tri-County Regional Planning Commission's Wellhead Protection Audit for regional best practices to protect the public water supply.

**Objective B: Maintain police, fire, and ambulance service to all areas of the community.**

**Objective C: Maintain quality library service for the community.**

**Objective D: Use land use policies to assist the public school districts which are a valued community asset that makes Meridian Township a unique and desirable place to live.**

**Strategies:**

1. Continue and/or initiate land use policies that attract families with students.
2. Support the Park Commission's agreement with the School Districts to coordinate park facilities and programs.
3. Support street and pathway improvements that provide safe access routes for school children.

**Objective E: Promote cooperation between adjoining communities, school districts, and appropriate agencies.**

**GOAL 6: PROVIDE AND SUPPORT AN EFFICIENT, SAFE, AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK**

**Objective A: Evaluate the existing transportation network and identify problems, including traffic congestion, safety, environment, and aesthetics, which can be solved at acceptable cost.**

**Strategies:**

1. Cooperate with county, regional and state entities to develop strategies to improve traffic flow.
2. Consider zoning and other design strategies such as Complete Streets as effective means of ensuring safe and efficient travel for all modes of transportation.

**Objective B: Maintain local roads.**

**Strategies:**

1. Support improvements to local streets when a special assessment district request has been received from local residents.
2. Review reconstruction and expansion of local non-subdivision streets through the Capital Improvements Program process when 50 percent of the improvement's funding will be paid for by the Township or its residents through special assessment districts.

**Objective C: Develop a Complete Streets policy for all users of Township roads.**

**Strategies:**

1. Define a vision for a Complete Streets program.
2. Review current policies to identify inconsistencies and impediments to implementing a Complete Streets policy.
3. Conduct planning, regulatory and physical audits of current street designs as needed and financially feasible.
4. Coordinate the Pedestrian-Bicycle Pathway Plan with Safe Routes to School policies and other Township plans.
5. Share the Township's vision and work with transportation and road authorities.

**Objective D: Expand and improve the Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathway Plan.**

**Strategies:**

1. Continue to implement the requirement for sidewalks as determined necessary.
2. Continue to implement the pedestrian/bicycle pathway system through site plan review.
3. Continue to support the pedestrian/bicycle pathway millage for construction and maintenance of the Township's pedestrian/bicycle pathway system.
4. Investigate alternative surfacing materials to reduce the amount of impervious surface materials used in the construction of the pedestrian/bicycle system.
5. Continue to investigate strategies for safe and efficient travel for bicyclists and pedestrians.
6. Coordinate the Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathway Plan with parks, schools, preserves, Greenspace Plan, neighborhoods, and other destinations.

**Objective E: Encourage the use of public transportation.**

**Strategies:**

1. Encourage and promote public transportation service to any new developments and in conjunction with redevelopment via site plan review.
2. Institute design standards for site plan review to ensure public transportation access to all segments of the population but particularly those with physical disabilities.

**Objective F: Coordinate Meridian Township's transportation planning with regional planning efforts administered by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission and recorded in the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan.**

**Strategies:**

1. Coordinate transportation planning and road improvements for all non-local streets with the region's long range plan.
2. Advocate and promote the Township's needs and interests in transportation improvements with transportation and road authorities.

**GOAL 7: PROMOTE EFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PRACTICES**

**Objective A:** Implement sustainable energy and environmental practices throughout the Township utilizing the most current best practices

**Strategies:**

1. Budget funds to have Township buildings assessed for energy efficiency a minimum of once every five years.
2. For Meridian Township procurement purposes, when equivalent products or services are available, preference should be given to the more sustainable services or products.
3. Encourage electric car charging stations.
4. Establish a minimum level of LEED certification or the equivalent for all projects undertaken by the Township.
5. Establish ordinances providing incentives for development that emphasize redevelopment, infill development, alternative energy, and building material reuse.
6. Increase the use of alternative transportation modes for commuting and recreation by encouraging the use of mixed use planned unit developments and implementing the Greenway Plan.
7. Explore methods through ordinances or by providing incentives for existing businesses to upgrade their parking lots and landscaping to increase tree cover and shade to be energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

8. Explore incentives for new or redeveloped projects to be LEED certified or equivalent.
9. Work with developers to consider alternative energy in site plan and construction of new development
10. Encourage the use of alternative energy throughout the township.

**Objective B: Develop Township policies to balance and manage growth.**

**Strategies:**

1. Integrate information technology including geographic information systems to facilitate continuous improvement of the Master Plan.
2. Use the Self-Assessment of Sustainability Toolkit as a guide to evaluate growth in the Township.

**Objective C: Maintain open spaces and natural features in suburban and rural areas of the Township.**

**Strategies:**

1. Continue to develop zoning standards and Township policies.
2. Continue to encourage and support voluntary citizen land conservancy efforts which maintain the Township's open spaces, natural features, and rural areas.

**Objective D: Define an urban services district to promote walkable community development and dynamic community improvement through redevelopment.**

**Strategies:**

1. Promote land use policies that emphasize compact infill development.
2. Investigate opportunities to maximize the use of existing infrastructure through development and redevelopment within the urban services district.
3. Investigate additional strategies to provide incentives for development and redevelopment within the urban services district.

**Objective E: Encourage development in Meridian Township that leads to sustainable land use.**

**Strategies:**

1. Engage all stakeholders to study new techniques for the control and management of development.
2. Review the legality and suitability of these techniques for Meridian Township.

**Objective F: Prepare and implement a redevelopment strategy**

**Strategies:**

1. Eliminate inflexible or obsolete zoning regulations.
2. Identify priority redevelopment sites.

3. Expand public participation.
4. Prepare annual reports to the Township Board reporting progress towards the stated benchmarks and recommending any needed changes.

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May 21, 2015

Planning Commission Work Session  
MASTER PLAN PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

ALL RECORDED PUBLIC COMMENTS BY GOAL/TABLE

Table 1 – GOAL 1: Preserve and strengthen residential neighborhoods. Richard Honicky

1. Ensure a variety of housing types.
2. Single senior housing.
3. Affordable, owner occupied, single family residences in older, established neighborhoods (to attract young families).
4. Using housing market to maintain density standards at “traditional” levels.
5. Renters by choice trend needs to be accommodated “across the board”.
6. Ensure public safety.
7. Central park in each neighborhood
8. Neighborhood association in each neighborhood.
9. Neighborhood code enforcement
10. Enforce environmental and safety standards in new developments

Table 2 – GOAL 2: Preserve open space and natural areas. Tom Deits

1. There is already too much development.
2. There is already too much pavement.
3. It’s great to have land preserved purely as natural areas, for nature.
4. There should be permanent staff to maintain existing natural areas
  - a. Remove invasive species
  - b. Trash
  - c. Debris
5. Fewer variances that decrease the amount of natural areas when development occurs.
6. Should implement the Greenspace plan as a requirement
7. The current state of greenspaces should be evaluated and Greenspace Plan updated based on the latest science.
8. Purchase development rights
9. Use zoning overlays/conservation easements to keep private land undeveloped.
10. Develop a natural features inventory and implement measures to protect them.
11. Keep the eastern part of the Township rural.
12. Create a tree protection ordinance that applies to road projects and new development.
13. Protect wetlands in their entirety, without modification (no mitigation).
14. Implement better storm water quality and control to protect the Red Cedar River.
15. From Williamston to MSU, make Red Cedar a featured/ kayaking and canoeing recreational area with launch areas and liveries.

16. Conserve Lake Lansing as a natural area (less chemical control) and increase access points for nature viewing.

Table 3. – GOAL 3: Enhance the viability of Township business. Christine Tenaglia

1. More commercial zoning along Grand River – change zoning
2. Walkable business district- centered at the mall.
3. Development of Hamilton/Okemos/Marsh restaurants.
4. Traffic consideration Okemos/Jolly.
5. Options for public transportation. Make downtown more accessible without driving.
6. Expansion of bike/walk pathways
7. Locally owned business –Look at other communities like Portland.
8. Brookfield to Van Atta (?)
9. Local entertainment draw. We need an attraction.
10. Repurpose Land Preservation tax use for walkability. Increasing millage.
11. Rehabilitate small shopping centers. Priority rehabilitation of smaller shops close to neighborhoods
12. Downtown Okemos-
  - a. Restaurants,
  - b. mixed use,
  - c. better parking
  - d. Higher end businesses
  - e. Outdoor dining.
13. Lost Movie, lost a lot
14. Restaurants starting to suffer
15. More commercial development at Okemos and I-96 Offices only
16. Grand River compare to other areas
17. Zoning Issues, Change Grand River Zoning
18. Wants walkability-infrastructure. Mall is the hub-Playmakers-Dusty's downtown
  - a. Infrastructure problematic
  - b. Development of Hamilton and Okemos Road
19. No sidewalks
20. Support Commercial development Brookfield to Van Atta
21. Okemos/Haslett-good mid-priced bar restaurant
  - a. Mixed use
  - b. Residential above
  - c. Downtown Brewery- apartments
22. Who are we thinking? What is in Okemos to attract people- higher end fashion

Table 4. - GOAL 4: Maintain and expand a diverse park system. **Brett DeGross**

1. Increase
  - a. Walkability
  - b. Connectivity
  - c. Bikeability
2. Soccer fields – Haslett
3. Canoe/Kayak Launch – Harris Nature Center and Wonch Park
4. Update maps and APPS?
5. River Clean Up- keep paths clean
6. Paved internal /loop park trails
7. Towne Courier –park update
8. Bike share
9. Public/private partnership
10. Adaptive park equipment (swings)
11. Bike racks – MORE! And Lockers
12. Facebook/ social media for Parks specifically.

Table 5.- GOAL 5: Maintain essential public services. **Joyce Van Covering**

1. Keep two (2) libraries
2. Community policing
3. Shared service model s/ communications/conversations between municipalities
4. Sewer and water policies to encourage responsible growth
5. Larger library. LARGE central library.
6. Police body cameras
7. Community policing
8. Assigned police officers to neighborhoods
9. Proactive involvement. More Township involvement
10. Prescription bottles with drugs taken/ allergies, so EMS knows if they come. Taped to side wall of refrigerator.
11. Shared services model for Haslett, Okemos, Williamston and East Lansing
  - a. Mailing surplus
12. “Conversations” between municipalities

Table 6. – GOAL 6: Provide and support an efficient, safe and environmentally sensitive multi-modal transportation network. **Holly Cordill**

1. Street lights Marsh Road
2. Trails
3. BRT
4. Public Transit
5. Local Streets, for pavement

May 21, 2015 Work Session  
Complete Public Comments

6. Bike, complete streets. BIKE LANES.
7. Traffic
8. Roads
9. Redi-Ride

Table 7. – GOAL 7: Promote efficient and sustainable growth principles. Dante Ianni

1. Infill and growth up-not out.
2. Urban services boundaries
3. Incentives for developers
  - a. Green based i.e. LED Lighting
4. Renewable vs. Clean
  - a. Focus Clean
5. Sustainability varies in parts of Township
  - a. Code
6. Form-based code
7. Phase II energy audit
8. Central person (group) focused on sustainable energy programs
  - a. Grand River fire stations- using geothermal
  - b. Integrated into building code
9. Flexibility in code
10. Incentives for developers, private citizens and businesses
  - a. for redevelopment\*
  - b. Contaminated sites
11. Green energy for Township and other government buildings
12. Up front tax credits
13. Good to level playing field
14. Township taking the lead as an example
15. Brownfield credits
16. 60/40 Residential/Renters

MAY 21, 2015

Planning Commission Work Session  
MASTER PLAN PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

"THREE MAIN IDEAS" BY GOAL/TABLE

GOAL 1: Preserve and strengthen residential neighborhoods.

- A. Provide a variety of housing (11)
  - a. Owner occupied (1)
  - b. Senior options (4)
  - c. Renters by choice (2)
  - d. Aging in place (2)
  - e. Appropriate locations (2)
- B. Ensure code enforcement (16)
  - a. Density
  - b. Public Safety
  - c. Environmental standards
- B. Attract young families
  - a. Schools
  - b. Affordable housing (20)

GOAL 2: Preserve open space and natural areas.

- A. Develop an inventory of greenspace and other natural features; enforce and focus development and preservation, through: (33)
  - a. Purchase development rights
  - b. Use zoning overlays
  - c. Construction easements
  - d. Develop tree protection ordinance (4)
  - e. Fewer variances
- B. Enhance river quality and access (27)
- C. Have permanent township staff who steward or natural areas ( 17 plus township preserves) (14).

Goal 3: Enhance the viability of Township businesses.

- A. Rehabilitation of primary commercial districts ( Grand River Avenue, Okemos/ Marsh/ DDA) (50)
  - a. Flexibility in zoning
  - b. Flexibility in ordinances
  - c. Include social, meeting space
- B. Connectivity for (?) access (traffic, pedestrians, bikes, parking ) (25)
  - a. Easy
  - b. Safe
  - c. Park once mentality

May 21, 2015  
"Three Main Ideas"

- C. Entice/Incentivize locally owned businesses to develop in our satellite business districts; i.e. Carriage Hills, Village Square, Shoptown (23)

Goal 4: Maintain and expand a diverse park system.

- A. Trail connectivity (43)
  - a. Park "Loops"
  - b. Bike share as a public/private partnership
  - c. River clean up
- B. Communications (16)
  - A. Applications and maps and weather alerts
  - B. More use of Towne Courier
  - C. More Use of Facebook
  - D. Weather Alerts at every park
- C. Park Enhancements
  - a. Soccer fields in Haslett (8)
  - b. Swings – adaptive (2)
  - c. Kayak Launch(5)
  - d. Bike lockers and racks (1)

Goal 5: Maintain essential public services

- A. Keep two (2) libraries (9)
- B. Community policing (12)
- C. Shared services and conversations between municipalities (6)

Goal 6: Provide and support an efficient, safe and environmentally sensitive multi-modal transportation network.

- A. Implement complete streets (28)
- B. Local road maintenance (13)
- C. public transit (11)
  - a. More efficient
  - b. Crossing township borders (lines)

Goal 7: Promote efficient and sustainable growth principles.

- A. Implement Urban Services Boundary (USMA) (35)
  - a. Utilize infill
  - b. Utilize form-based code
- B. Sustainability Ombudsman (14)
  - a. Green and Clean
  - b. Lead by example within Township
- C. Development based on cultural growth and preservation of local culture (3)

Memorandum

To: Meridian Township Planning Commission

Date: April 15, 2016

From: Paul Lippens, AICP, Principal Planner

Subject: **Master Plan – Draft Demographics Text**

McKenna has prepared a draft Demographics section for discussion. The Township provided updated demographic information using 2010 U.S. Census data, and in addition to that information we have included the most recently released demographic estimates available, the 2014 American Community Survey.

We look forward to discussing this information with you and incorporating your feedback.

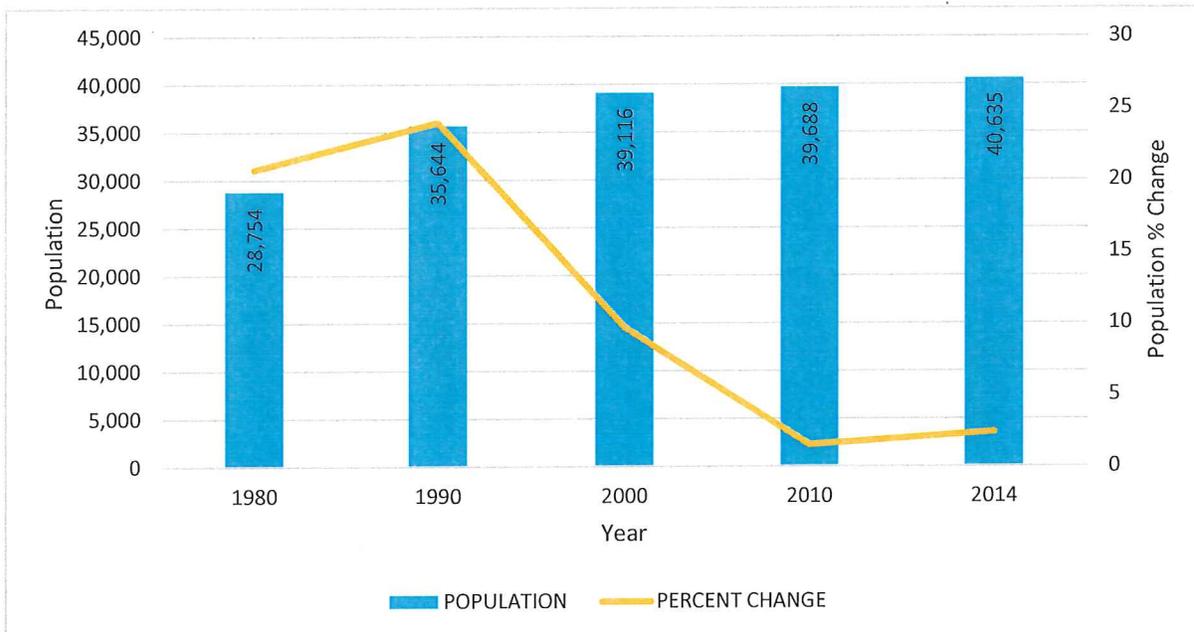
Thank you.

*[Note: The draft is not in final format, since that is one of the items on our agenda for discussion at your April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.]*

**General Trends and Regional Influences**

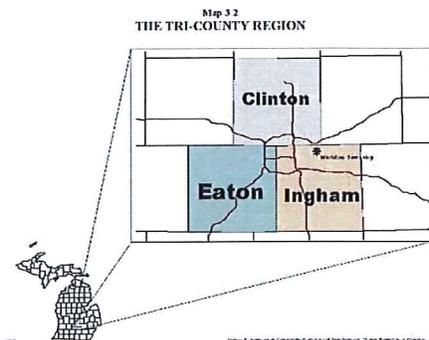
Meridian Township has grown in population in every decade since 1940, a trend that is closely related to the development of the Lansing Metropolitan Area. The growth reached its peak in 1990, when the population rose by nearly 23%. In subsequent decades, population has continued to increase, albeit at a much slower pace. In 2010, for example, the Township added 572 residents, an increase of only 1.4%. The trend of slowing population growth is changing, however. The 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates that the growth rate is up slightly, and estimates the population in the Township at 40,635, an all-time high.

**Chart 3-1**  
**Changes in Township Population, 1980 - 2014**



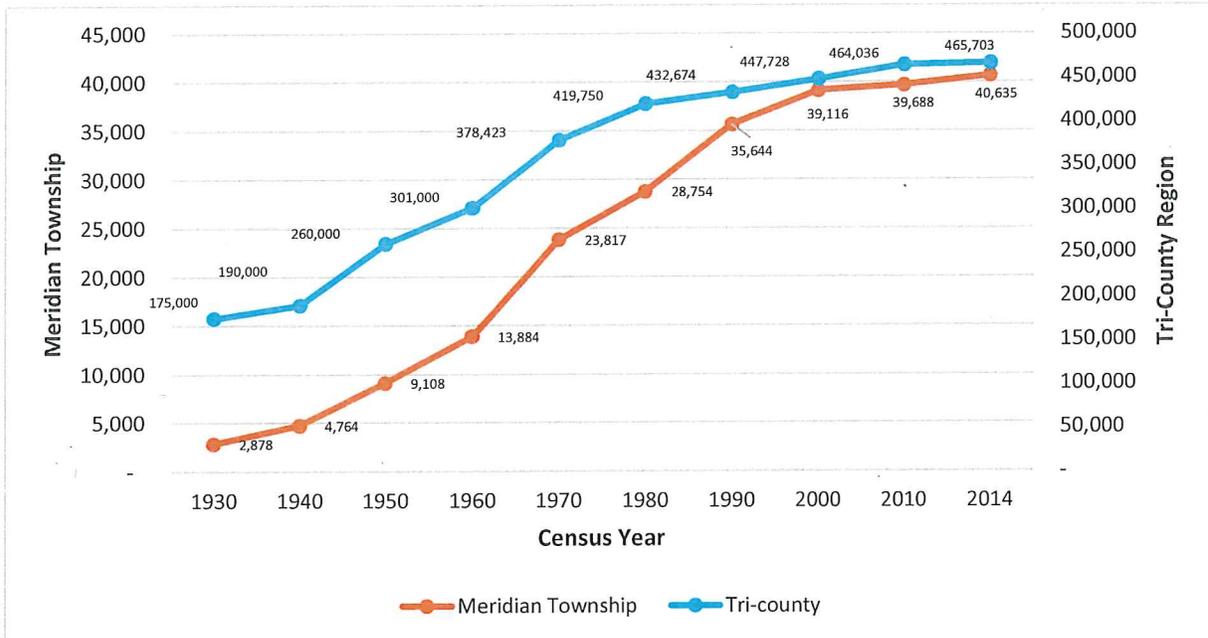
Sources: 1980-2010 Census, 2014 ACS, Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce

The Tri-County region, consisting of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties, has significant impact on the development and population change of Meridian Township going back many decades. By 1960, population in these three counties increased to approximately 300,000, fueled largely by the expansion of the three major employers that still dominate the region's economy: the State of Michigan government, Michigan State University, and the automobile industry. As the economy grew in the Tri-County region, workers and their families were



attracted to the area and urbanization pushed beyond the boundaries of Lansing and East Lansing into the surrounding Townships.

**Chart 3-2**  
**Changes in Township and Tri-County Population, 1980 - 2014**



Source: 2010 Census, 2014 ACS, Bureau of the Census, US Department of Commerce

Meridian Township responded by taking measures to accommodate a share of the region's growth. A zoning ordinance was adopted in 1948 to guide the development of the Township. The Township installed a sanitary sewer system, improving the quality of life for existing residents and facilitating development on lands that could not accommodate septic systems. In 1962, the Township installed sanitary sewer interceptors to all urbanized areas in the community. In 1968, Township residents approved a \$3.2 million bond to finance a water distribution system for the community.

During the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, region-wide development helped the population in the Township grow. More recently, the Lansing Township, the City of Lansing, and the City of East Lansing have been experiencing negative or slow population growth, while the surrounding communities of Meridian, Delta, DeWitt, and Delhi Townships have captured that population, offsetting the stagnant urban growth with significant gains. Meridian Township, the City of DeWitt, and DeWitt Township in particular have benefitted, with estimated population growth of 2.4%, 2.2%, and 1.5% respectively since 2010.

**Table 3-1**  
**Changes in Regional Population, 1980 – 2014**

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2014	Change '80-'90	Change '90-'00	Change '00-'10	Change '10-'14
City of DeWitt	3,165	3,964	4,702	4,507	4,606	25.2%	18.6%	-4.1%	2.2%
Delhi Township	17,144	19,190	22,569	25,877	26,028	11.9%	17.6%	14.7%	0.6%
DeWitt Township	10,038	10,448	12,143	14,321	14,542	4.1%	16.2%	17.9%	1.5%
Delta Township	23,822	26,129	29,682	34,408	32,657	9.7%	13.6%	15.9%	-5.1%
Meridian Township	28,754	35,644	39,116	39,688	40,635	24.0%	9.7%	1.5%	2.4%
Lansing Township	10,097	8,919	8,458	8,126	8,116	-11.7%	-5.2%	-3.9%	-0.1%
City of Lansing	130,414	127,321	119,128	114,297	114,382	-2.4%	-6.4%	-4.1%	0.1%
City of East Lansing	51,392	50,677	46,525	48,579	48,611	-1.4%	-8.2%	4.4%	0.1%
<b>Lansing Urbanized Area</b>	<b>274,826</b>	<b>282,292</b>	<b>282,323</b>	<b>289,803</b>	<b>289,577</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>-0.1%</b>
Ingham County	275,520	281,912	279,320	280,895	282,562	2.3%	-0.9%	0.6%	0.6%
Tri- County Region	419,750	432,674	447,728	464,036	465,703	3.1%	3.5%	3.6%	0.4%

Lansing Urbanized Area consists of Delhi Township, City of DeWitt, DeWitt Township, Delta Township, City of East Lansing, and City of Lansing, Lansing Township and Meridian Township

<sup>2</sup>Tri-County Region consists of Clinton, Eaton and Ingham Counties

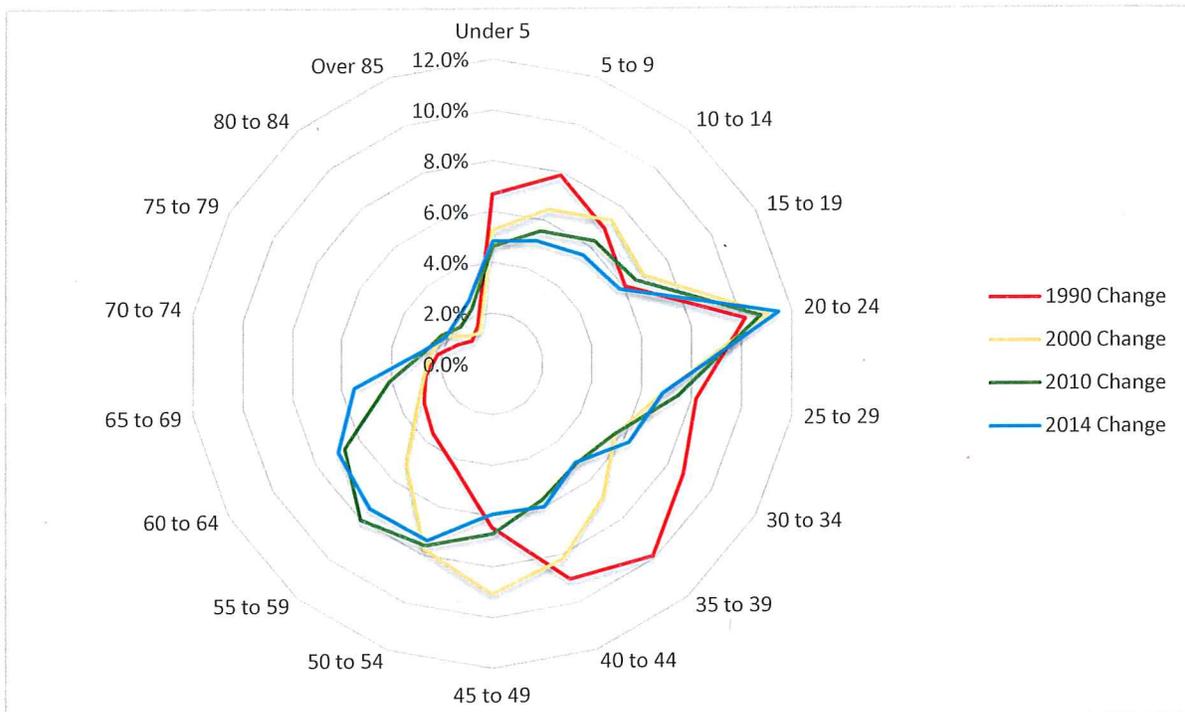
Sources: 1980-2010 Census, 2014 ACS, Bureau of the Census, US Department of Commerce

### Population Characteristics

Meridian Township, mirroring regional, state, and national trends, is aging. In 2014, the median age in the Township was estimated to be 39.1 years old, an increase from 38.2 years in 2010, 35.4 years in 2000, and 32.3 years in 1990. Chart 3-3, below, shows the median population age trending upward as the largest mass, representing the “Baby Boomer” generation, moves clockwise around the graph.

**Chart 3-3**

**Age of Township Population, 1990 - 2014**



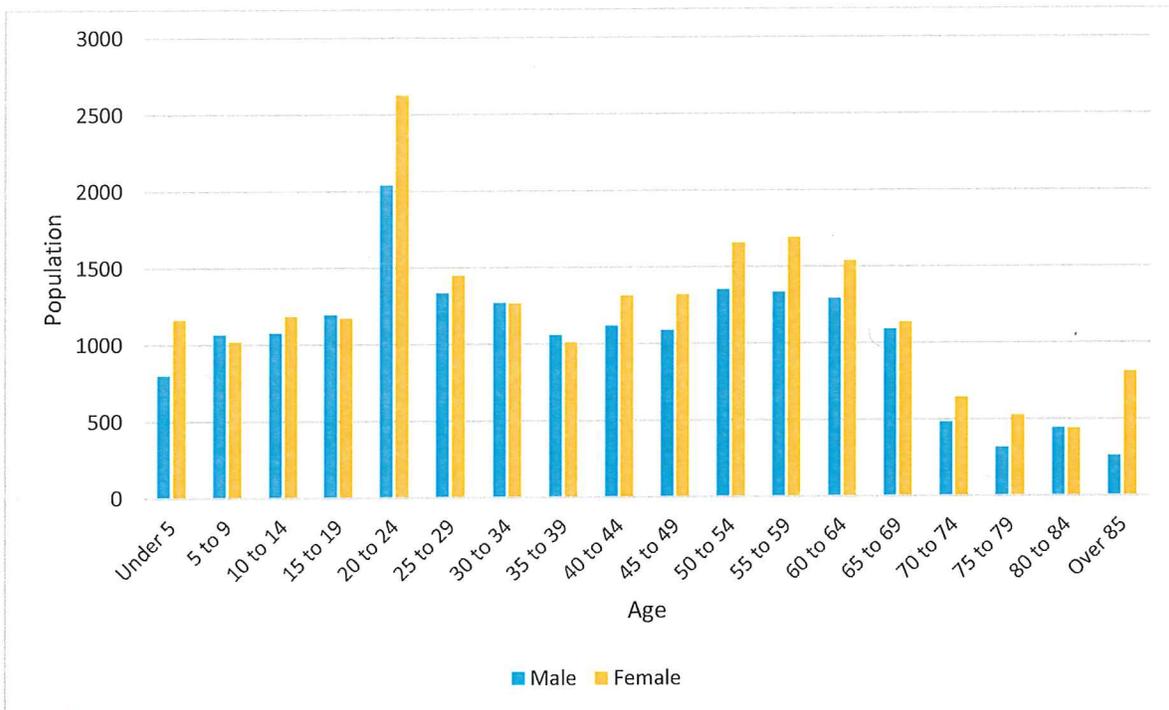
Sources: 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census, 2014 ACS, Bureau of the Census, US Department of Commerce

Meridian Township’s proximity to Michigan State University and Lansing Community College explains the consistent spike in population around the 20-24 year old age group since 1990. The presence of the University alone accounts for a population of nearly 50,000 young people centered in East Lansing and expanding into neighboring communities, including Meridian Township. In the Township, the percent of the population in the 20-24 year old age group has remained steady throughout the years, ranging from 10.2% in 1990 to an estimated 11.5% in 2014.

The age segments with the largest population in the 2014 ACS estimates hold true when broken down by gender, as well. The spike in population in the 20-24 year old age group is pronounced in Meridian

Township's male population, where its 2040 residents are 686 more than the next closest age group, 50-54 year olds. The spike is even more apparent in the female population, where its 2626 residents are 935 more than the next most common age group, 55-59 year olds.

**Chart 3-4**  
**Age-Sex Pyramid, 2014**



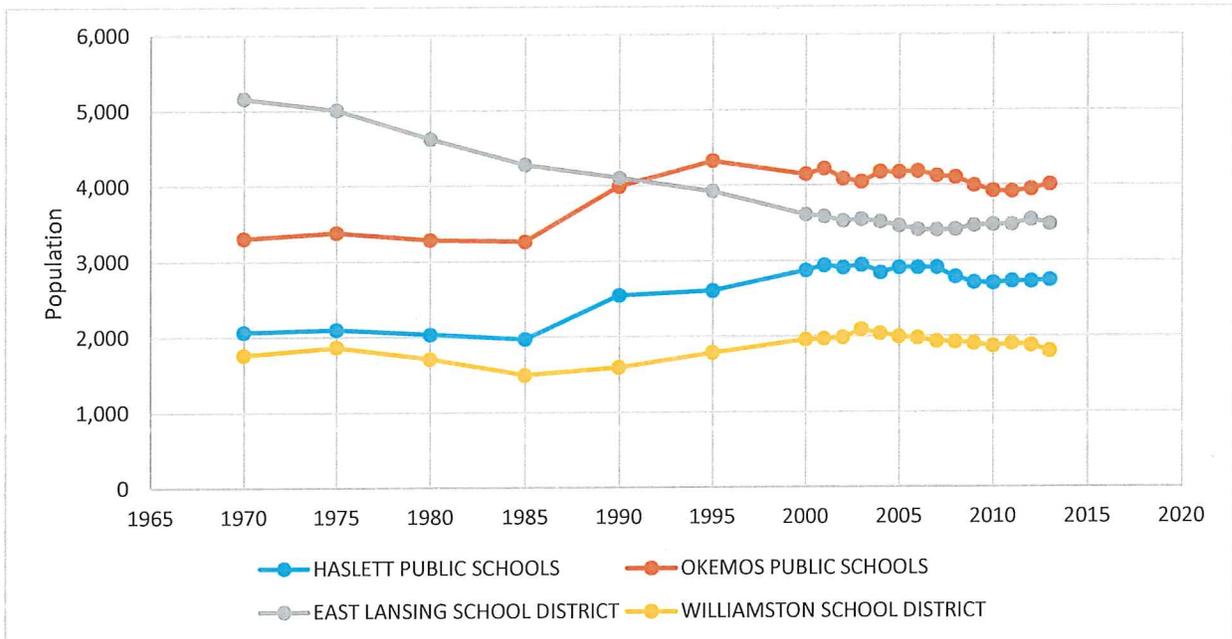
Source: 2014 ACS, Bureau of Census, U. S. Department of Commerce

Viewed collectively, the ratio of males to females in the Township's population is estimated to be 45.9 to 54.1, respectively. This disparity has increased slightly since 2000, when 47.8% of the population was male and 52.2% was female.

Before the 2014 ACS estimates, the Township experienced a decline in the proportion of the population in prime child-bearing age groups since 1990. In that year, 35.9% of the population was aged between 25 and 44 years old. By 2000, that number was 27.5%, and 23.9% by 2010. That number has taken a slight upward turn, with 24.2% of the population in prime child-bearing age groups. These statistics coincide with the trend of the number of school-aged children that attend one of Meridian Township's two major school districts.

Haslett Public Schools and Okemos Public Schools experienced a significant increase in students during the late 1980's and 1990's. Okemos Schools' enrollment peaked in 1995 while Haslett continued to grow reaching its peak in 2001. Haslett Public Schools projects enrollment will decline 3.3 percent from its 2001 high and Okemos Public Schools anticipates a 10.5 percent decline from its 1995 high.

**Chart 3-5**  
**K-12 School Enrollment, 1970 - 2013**



Sources: East Lansing School District, Haslett Public Schools, Okemos Public Schools, Williamston School District, Michigan School Data

The East Lansing School District, which serves the northwest corner of the Township, has been experiencing a gradual decline in its enrollment since 1970. The East Lansing School District projects that these declines will continue for the next three years. The Williamston School District, which serves the southeast corner of the Township, experienced some decline in student enrollment in the 1980's but the 1990's showed steady enrollment increases. Enrollment for 2003-04 was at a 30-year high. Okemos Schools' enrollment peaked between 1995 and 2000 and is gradually declining now.

The decline in the proportion of 0-9 and 25 - 39 age groups has been offset by older age brackets and the continuing presence of long-time residents and the general aging of the population. Demographers have noted that the baby-bust that took place after the baby-boom reduced the number of people currently in the 25-39 year old age groups. That, coupled with the exodus out of the state by people in the 25-34

age groups to areas with more attractive employment opportunities and climate, may result in a widening generation gap in the future.

### **Housing Size and Composition**

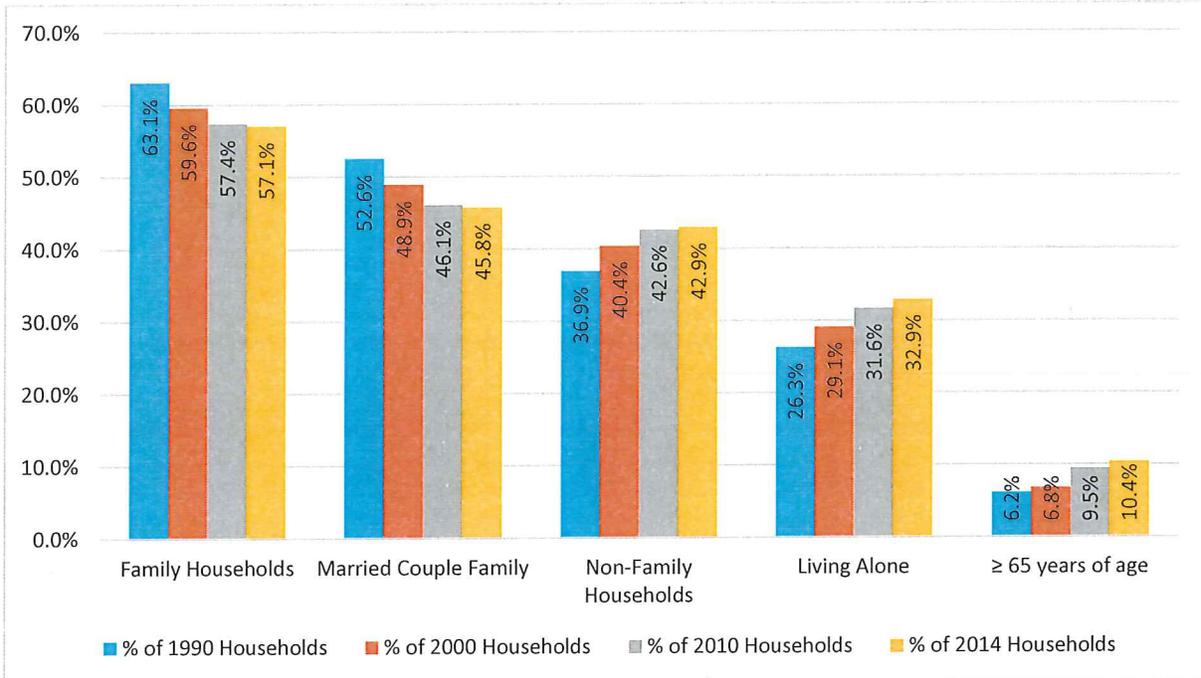
As defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, a *Family Household* is one where a householder and one or more other people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Alternatively, a *Non-Family Household* is one where a householder lives alone or with non-related people.

In Meridian Township, there has been a consistent decrease in household size for the past four decades. 2014 ACS estimates project that the size increased slightly for the first time since 1970, up to 2.29 persons per household from 2.26 persons in 2010. By comparison, average household size in the Tri-County Region in 2014 was estimated to be 2.45 persons, and across the State of Michigan, 2.52 persons were estimated per household.

In addition to smaller households, the Township has experienced a trend of decreasing ratio of family households that is similar to the rest of the region and state. Family households of all types are declining in prevalence, while non-family households and people living alone become more common. Those choosing to live alone make up 76.5% of all non-family households in the Township, contributing to the decrease in average household size.

Chart 3-6

Household Composition in Meridian Township, 1990-2014



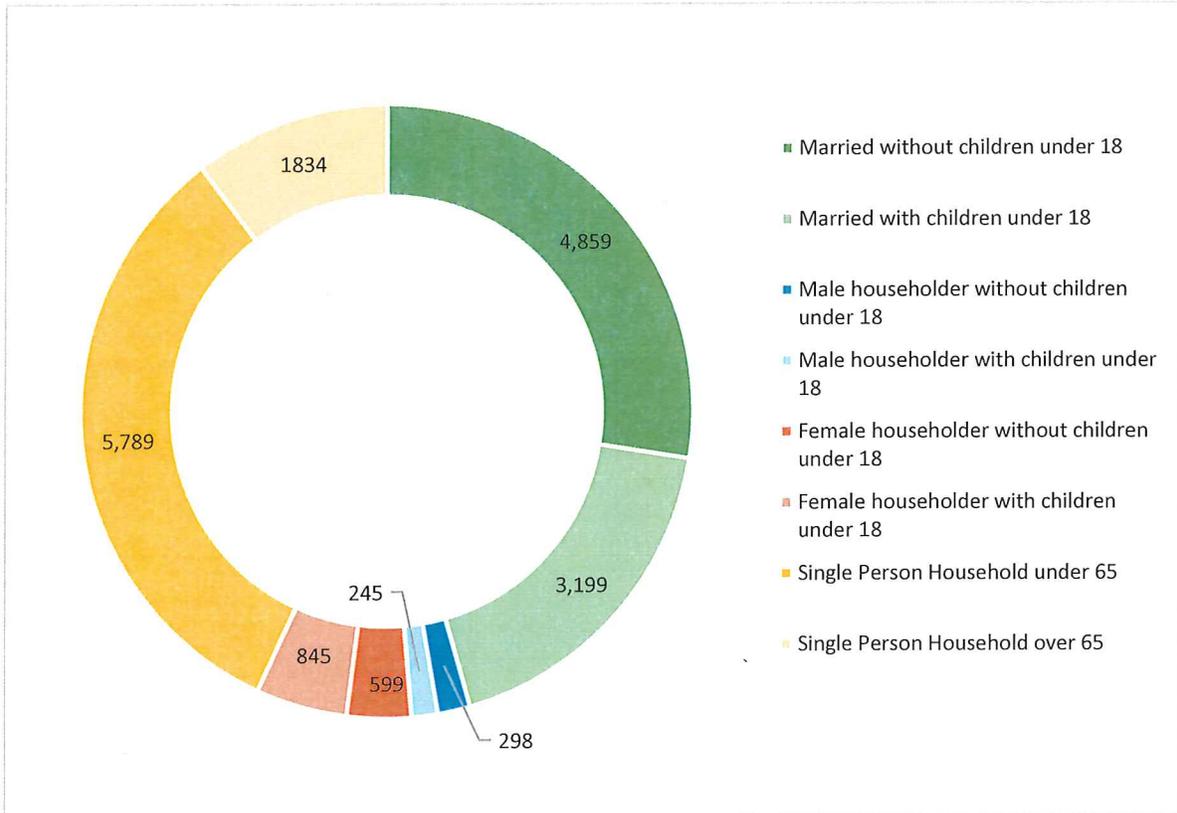
Sources: 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census, 2014 ACS, Bureau of the Census, US Department of Commerce

There were 17,605 total households in Meridian Township in 2014, according to ACS estimates. Roughly 57.1% of those were family households. These estimates do not indicate much change from the 2010 U.S. Census, when there were 17,377 total households, 57.4% of which were family households.

Of those 10,045 family households in Meridian Township in 2014, 8,058 of them consisted of a married couple. Of those married couples, 60.3% had no children living with them. Married couples made up 45.8% of all households in the Township in 2014, a slight decline from the 46.1% in 2010, when 55.9% of those households didn't have children living with them.

Chart 3-7

Composition of Meridian Township Households, 2014



Source: 2014 ACS, Bureau of the Census, US Department of Commerce

Of the remaining 1987 family households in Meridian Township, 72.7% (1444) were led by a female householder. 845 (58.5%) of those female-led households had children under 18 years old in them. Males led 443 of the non-married family households in the Township, and of those 55.3% had children under 18 years old. 54.9% of the non-married households in the Township, regardless of the gender of the household leader, had children to support.

Increasing population and decreasing household size can create demand for additional housing units. In 1990, 14,315 housing units housed the Township's total population of 35,644. By the year 2000, 16,624 units were available, and by 2010 there were 18,569. ACS estimates for 2014 are lower than the number of existing units, estimating 18354, with a margin of error of 404 units.

There is national market demand for renter-occupied housing, and Meridian Township has continued to

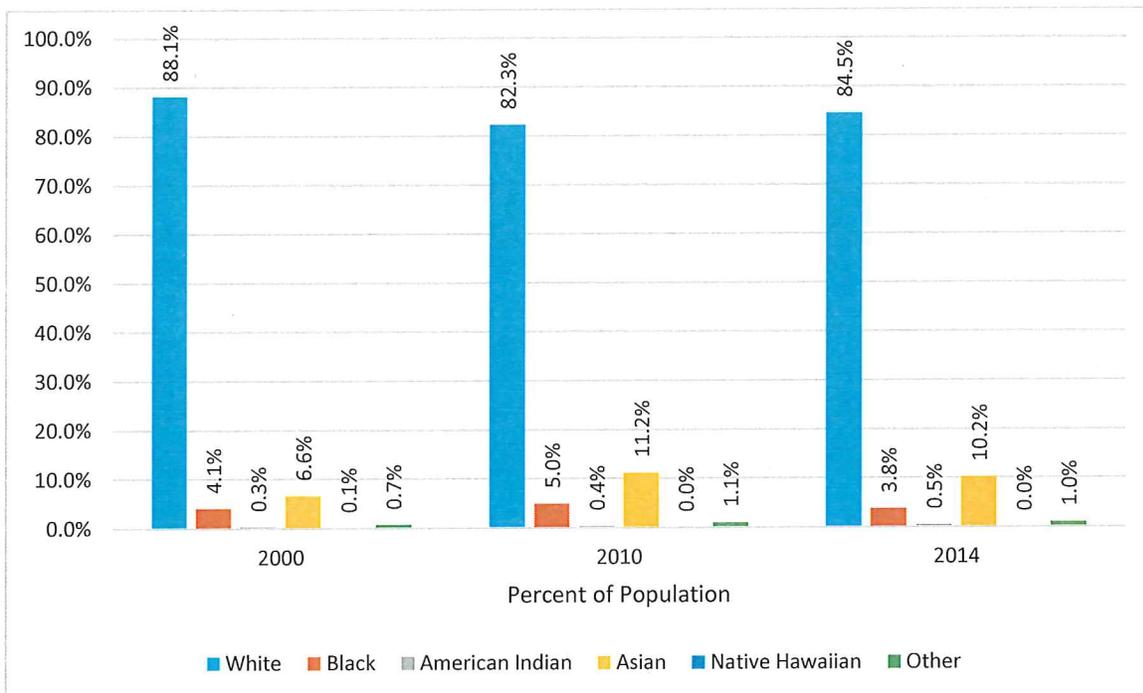
follow a similar trend. The increase in demand for renter-occupied housing in the Township does not compete with the volume of demand in East Lansing, but it does retain some of the effects of Michigan State University's presence in its rental market. Of the 17,605 housing units available in 2014, 39.4% were renter-occupied. This is a slight increase from 2010, when 39.2% of the units available were rented by the occupant, which was an increase from the year 2000, when the renter-occupied rate was 37.9%.

**Racial Composition**

The majority of Meridian Township’s population, according to 2014 ACS estimate, identify their race to be White (84.5% of the population). Those who identified as Asian are the next highest percentage, at 10.2%, followed by Black (3.8%), Other (1.0%), and American Indian (0.5%). Diversity has slowly increased in the Township, but it remains predominantly white. The Lansing-East Lansing Metropolitan area is comprised of a similar make-up, as is the State of Michigan, albeit to a lesser extent.

**Chart 3-8**

**Racial Composition of Meridian Township, 2000 - 2014**



Sources: 2000 and 2010 Census, 2014 ACS, Bureau of the Census, US Department of Commerce

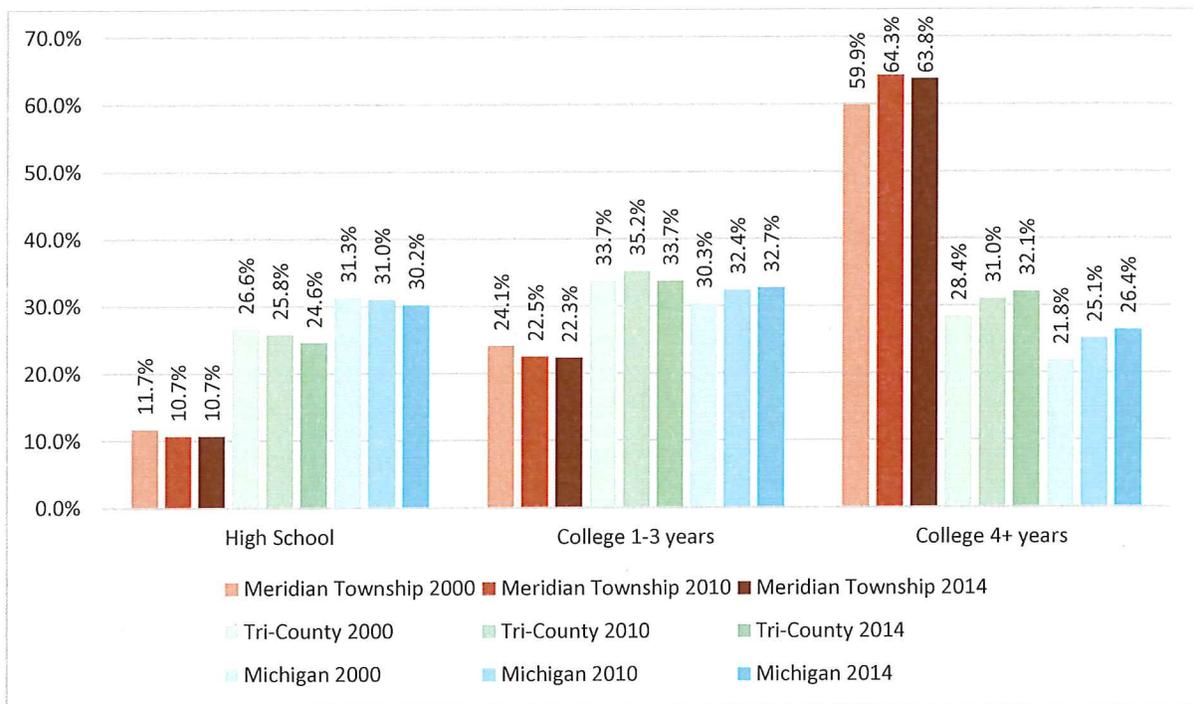
The changing ethnic diversity is reflected in a question on the Census regarding language spoken at home. Eight (8) percent of Meridian Township residents who were five years and older in 1990 spoke another language other than English. In 2000, that number grew to 11%, and in 2010 it rose to 14.2%. The ACS estimates that the number rose again by 2014, to 15.5%.

**Education and Employment**

Meridian Township has a very well-educated population, including a college-educated population of 63.8%, nearly double the Tri-County population and well over double the percentage of residents statewide. In fact, nearly 97% of the population of the Township over the age of 25 has at least a high school diploma. This percentage of highly educated residents may be related to the Township’s proximity to Michigan State University and Lansing Community College, as municipalities that are near large universities nationwide exhibit the same tendency.

**Chart 3-9**

**Educational Attainment in the Population Older than 25 Years, 2000 - 2014**

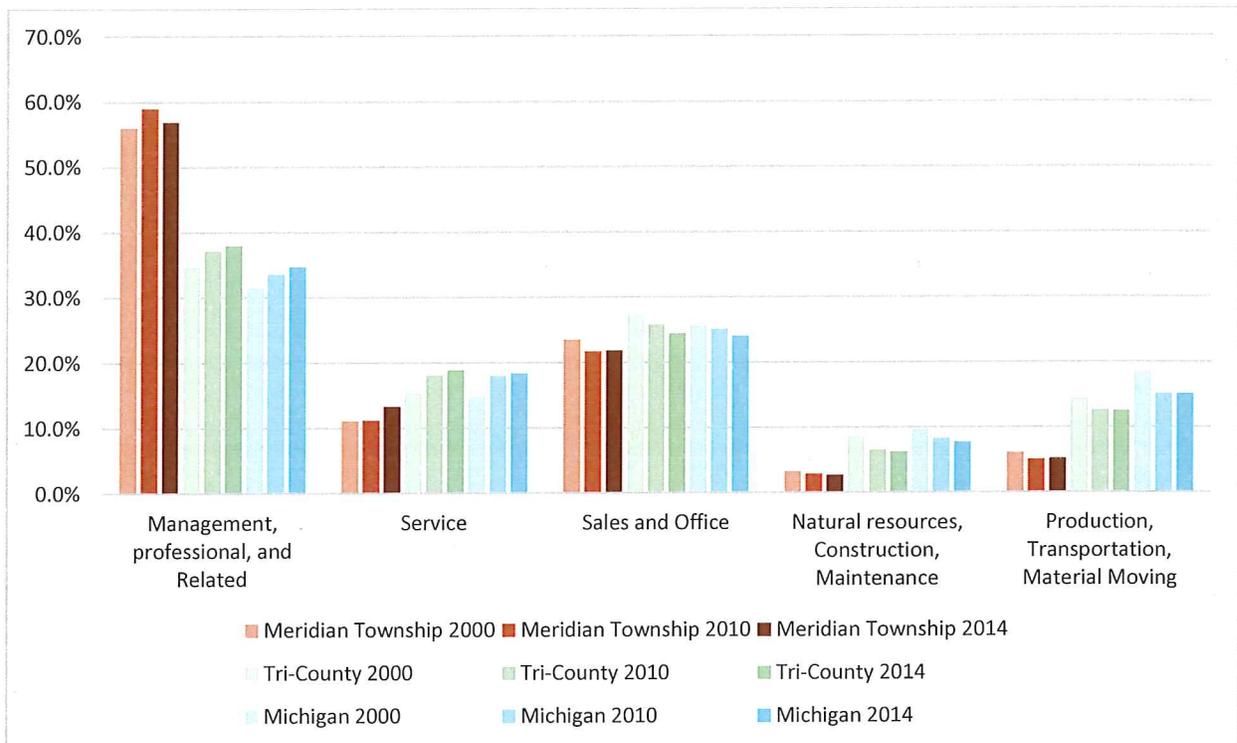


Source: 2010 Census, 2014 ACS, Bureau of the Census, US Department of Commerce

The educational attainment of residents is reflected in the types of occupations that they are engaged in. In 2014, nearly 58% of Township residents engaged in management, professional, and related occupations, while another 21% were engaged in sales and office occupations. A very small population of the residents, roughly 5%, described their occupation as production, transportation, and material moving. Even less are engaged in a construction, maintenance, or natural resource occupation.

**Chart 3-10**

### Employment by Sector, 2000 - 2014



Source: 2010 Census, 2014 ACS, Bureau of the Census, US Department of Commerce

Census figures show that the mean travel time to work for Meridian Township residents was 20.2 minutes in 2010, suggesting many travel outside the Township's six square miles to work. That time is estimated to have decreased to 19.9 minutes in 2014, and overall the Township travel-to-work time is comparable to the Tri-County region where Ingham County had the shortest mean travel time of 19.9 minutes while Clinton County had the longest at 23.3 minutes. This is likely due to Clinton County's distance from the Lansing and East Lansing city centers.

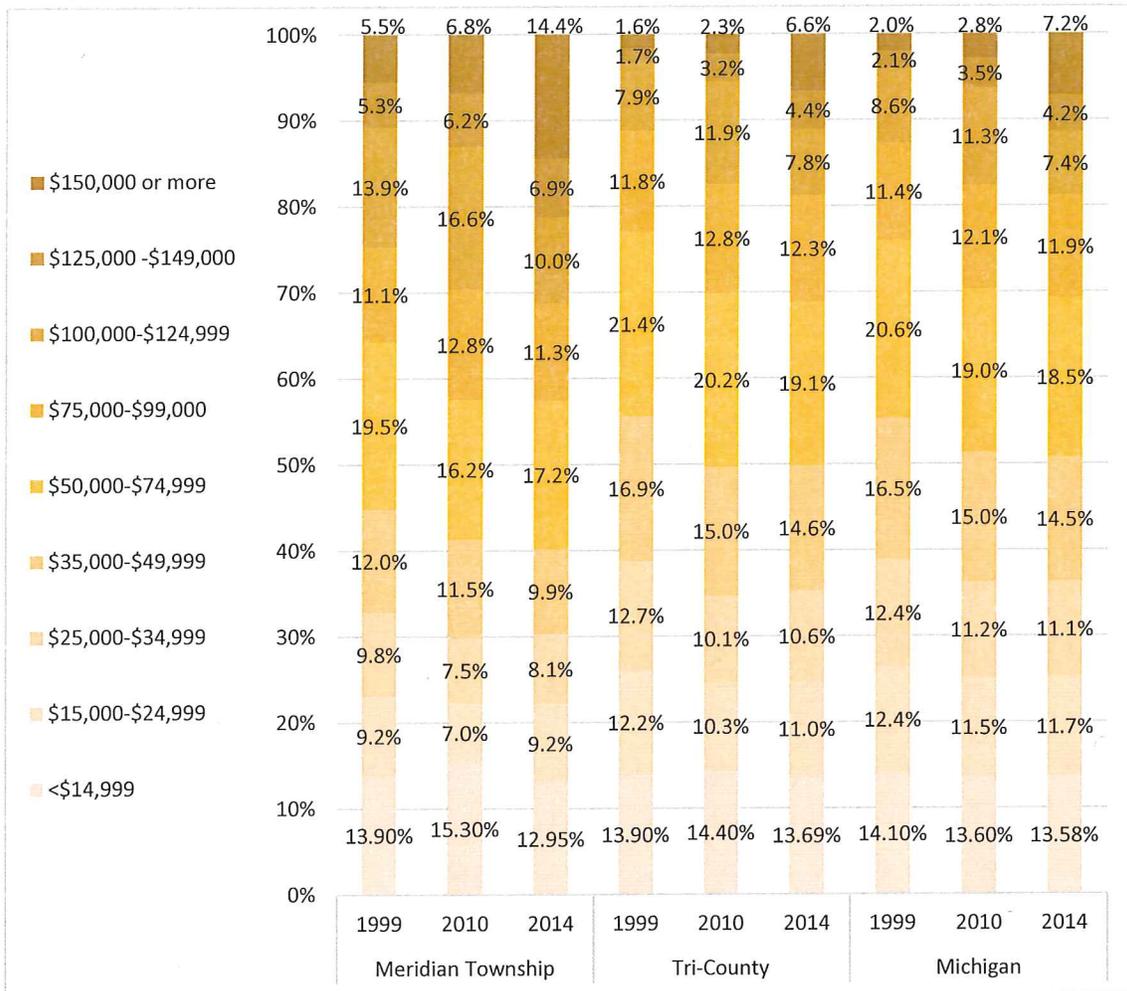
### Income

Consistent with the education levels attained, households in Meridian Township generally enjoy a high standard of living. The U.S. Census reports income by both *households* and *families*. A *household* can be made up of any of the following: one person living alone, one or more unrelated persons living in the same household, or a family. In 2014, the average median household income was \$63,067 total, up from 2010 when the average was \$61,496 and 2000 when the average was \$41,530. Perhaps more interesting is the large discrepancy between households that own and rent their housing. The median income for owner-occupied housing was estimated at \$92,971, versus \$30,023 for households that rent.

Like the State and Tri-County region, Meridian Township has seen increases in the share of wealthy households. The percentage of households bringing in over \$150,000 in Meridian is twice the state-wide figure, highlighting the affluent population that makes up the Township.

Chart 3-11

Percent of Households by Income, 2000-2014



Sources: 2000 and 2010 Census, 2014 ACS, Bureau of the Census, US Department of Commerce

The Census Bureau defines family households as a householder and one or more additional persons related by birth, marriage or adoption living together. Meridian Township’s median family income was \$80,114 in 2000, steadily rising to \$91,073 in 2010 and an estimated \$94,658 in 2014. The median family income in 2014 for the Tri-County region ranged from a low of \$63,149 in Ingham County to a high of \$73,558 in Clinton County. The State’s median family income was \$61,684 in 2014. Overall, household and family income levels have increased over the years, resulting in a substantial increase in the proportion of households in the middle and upper income categories.

In 1999, the Department of Housing and Urban development defined poverty by the number of people living in a household and the household's income—a single person living alone and earning less than \$8,240 per year, a family of four earning less than \$16,700 per year, and in 2013 those numbers grew to \$11,888 and \$23,834 per year, respectively. The percentage of residents whose income falls below the poverty line is estimated to have fallen slightly in 2014 since the 2010 Census, from 14.4% down to 13.4%, even though the actual number of residents has increased slightly. Of the 5,445 claiming income levels below the poverty line in 2014, 545 were children under 18, and 327 were over 65 years of age. 42% of those below the poverty line are aged 18 to 24 years, or college-aged adults who are likely to be renting their living space and taking educational courses.

## **Summary**

Meridian Township is a community that is highly influenced by the Lansing-East Lansing Metropolitan Area, both socially and economically. It is also a community with many attractive resources and much developable land, and as such, it is a community that needs to be concerned with how population change will drive development in the coming years.

The Township has grown steadily, welcoming residents as the population of Lansing and East Lansing seek a more suburban lifestyle. Meridian serves as a home for many college-aged renters, but at the same time, the largest sector of the population is aging. The resultant age gap will likely need to be addressed in the near future, as will the economic gap that is apparent between those who own their housing (likely the aging population) and those who rent (likely young adults in college).

The overwhelming majority of Meridian Township's population is college-educated, and the occupations that support the people are indicative of that; management, professional, and sales jobs are among the most popular, while the construction, transportation, and service sectors are less likely to employ Meridian's residents. With the high skill requirements of the employment that the Township's residents seek come high salaries, and the Township has twice the State-wide percentage of the population that brings in over \$150,000 each year. On the opposite side of the spectrum, roughly the same percentage of the population falls below the poverty line; nearly half of those, however, are college-aged adults who are likely focused on school and are not earning a substantial income.

A review of the demographic data reveals two distinct population groups: established, wealthy professionals who have settled into the Township, and young, mobile, low-income adults who are less invested in the community. Meridian Township must be cognizant of these groups, who perhaps have different needs and expectations from the community at large, as it lays out goals and objectives for future development.

