October 27, 2026 Township Board Listening Session

SUMMARY

Since 2022, the Meridian Township Board has established a goal to enhance communication and outreach to the Township's 45,000 residents. To help meet this goal, the Board scheduled three Listening Sessions in 2026:

- **Tuesday, May 12**
  - 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm at 2|42 Community Center (2630 Bennett Road, Okemos)
- **Tuesday, July 28**
  - 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm at Central Park Pavilion (5151 Marsh Road, Okemos)
- **Thursday, October 27**
  - 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm at St. Luke Lutheran Church (5589 Van Atta Road, Haslett)

After each listening session, staff will provide a written summary with information about what was discussed. If a resident is unable to attend a session, they can provide feedback online at https://bit.ly/ListeningSessionsForm.

The October 27, 2026 Listening Session was attended by 24 individuals. The Listening Session commenced just after 6:00 pm with a welcome from Township Supervisor Hendrickson and introducing the Township Board: Clerk Angela Demas, and Trustees Kathy Ann Sundland, Peter Trezise, and Marna Wilson. Treasurer Linda Burghardt and Trustee Nickolas Lentz were unable to attend.

Staff then provided brief updates on the following topics:
- Election Updates, Township Clerk Angela Demas
- Park Millage Renewal, Parks & Recreation Director Courtney Wisinski
- Public Safety Millage Renewal, Chief of Police Rick Grillo and Fire Chief Mike Hamel
- Permanent Speed Display Signs, Deputy Township Manager Dan Opsommer

After those updates, the Supervisor opened the floor to attendees to submit their written questions. Questions were also submitted electronically prior to the meeting via the Township's website. Additionally, the Township Board stayed beyond the official end time of 7:30 pm to continue answering questions from constituents.

A summary of the topics and questions follows. Please note that not all submitted questions are listed individually as overlapping questions have been combined.

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Any plans to pave Tihart Road between Cornell Road and Van Atta Road or other gravel roads?

Tihart Road has been paved over time by developers as a conditional approval of private developments from Marsh Road to Twinging Drive. There are only two ways historically that gravel roads have been paved:

1. By developers as a conditional approval of their private development.

2. Through a special assessment district paid for by the property owners who own frontage along the portion of the road being paved (property owners pay a special assessment proportionate to how many linear feet of frontage they own).

If the Township's street improvement bond continues to be approved by voters, there could come a time when the Township has caught up on the backlog of existing paved local roads in poor condition and there could be funding for paving gravel roads. However, the Township would gather public input from those who own frontage on the portion of the road in question before paving it.

Under state law, we cannot legally establish speed limits on gravel roads. Therefore, the speed limit cannot be established until the road has been paved. Paving will increase speeds. It's very likely that the resulting speed limit is 45 or 55 mph as speed limits are established using the 85th percentile speed.

The Township is currently planning a project with the Ingham County Road Department to improve the condition of the following gravel roads by pulverizing the existing material to convert it all back to lose gravel, grading the road to establish a crown for drainage, and removing any grass berms that have formed along the edge of the road that are obstructing drainage:

- Tihart Road from Cornell Road to Van Atta Road
- Gravel portion of Van Atta Road
- Gravel portion of Powell Road

At the conclusion of this project, the roads will be gradable once again, making them easier to maintain. The Township has also informed the Ingham County Road Department that it will fund a third dust-control treatment on all gravel roads each year. The Ingham County Road Department currently provides two dust-control treatments annually.

What's going on with the Haslett Road Diet?

In response to public input and to improve safety, the Township conducted a traffic study and crash analysis of the entire Haslett Road corridor from late 2025 through the spring of 2026. This study will help inform ways to calm traffic and increase safety for all users.

One finding of the study was that Haslett Road, from Park Lake Road to Marsh Road, is a viable candidate for a road diet. Road diets improve safety for all roadway users by reducing vehicle-to-vehicle conflicts, calming traffic, and creating a safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.

To read more about road diets, visit this PDF from the **U.S. Department of Transportation**.

The road diet is currently expected to be performed in 2028 along with a partial depth resurfacing of portions of Haslett Road from Okemos Road to Park Lake Road. Possible pedestrian safety improvements include adding pedestrian crosswalks along the Haslett Road corridor at Westminster Way, near the Parkwood YMCA, Boise Ile Drive, Bayonne Avenue, and Benson Drive. These crosswalks could include flashing light systems and/or pedestrian refuge islands.

To further improve pedestrian safety, the Township recently completed construction of the American House Meridian Pathway. This new off-road trail connected the existing Inter-Urban/MSU to Lake Lansing Trail with the pathway on the south side of Haslett Road at the Benson Drive intersection *(shown in green on the map linked below)*.

Haslett Road Pathway Construction Map

Once a safe crossing can be established at the Haslett Road/Benson Drive intersection, the trail will be extended north through Hillbrook Park to connect with Lake Lansing Road *(shown in purple on the map linked above)*.

In 2027, the Township will also be constructing a pathway along the south side of Haslett Road from Okemos Road to Park Lake Road *(shown in green on the map above).* A federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant that was secured in the fall of 2025 will fund 80% of this project.

Once this pathway is constructed, a contiguous pathway will run along the north and south sides of Haslett Road from the city limit of East Lansing to Copper Creek Drive/Bird Farm Lane in Meridian Township.

PARKS

Can we please do more to keep our pathways litter free?

There are 90 miles of pathways in the Township. Staff do their best to address litter and trash but cannot cover the entire system each day. The Township appreciates residents who are willing assist keeping them clean by picking up litter when they see it.

What is the time frame for storm damage repairs at Lake Lansing?

The County was still working to enter into contracts with contractors to remove the remaining storm debris as of the date of this listening session. The Township shared information with the County regarding how we conducted the removal of all the storm debris after the August 2023 tornado. The County's timeline is currently to be determined. For updates, please contact the Ingham County Parks Department at parks@ingham.org or 517.676.2233.

What is the Township doing to improve bicycle safety?

Meridian Township is working on many different projects to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety:

- In conjunction with MDOT, the Township plans to install mast arms with crosswalk signage over the three pedestrian refuge islands on Grand River Avenue. The mast arms and signage will increase motorist awareness of the crosswalks during the day. Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) are not viable in these locations due to the pedestrian counts and traffic speeds. However, there will be lighting that illuminates the crosswalks the full width of the roadway from dusk to dawn.
- Phase III of the MSU to Lake Lansing Trail has begun construction on the Pike Crossing Land Preserve. This is a 10'-wide, ADA-accessible paved trail that is part of the MSU to Lake Lansing Trail. This phase will terminate on the west side of Carlton Street and is the first segment of Phase III that will eventually terminate at Lake Lansing Park North.
- Haslett Road Diet and related trail/pathway projects along Haslett Road referenced above.
- Installation of the first seven permanent speed display signs referenced in the presentation.
- The Township is also working on a traffic study and crash analysis for Marsh Road with Haslett Public Schools and the Ingham County Road Department. This study will examine ways to improve safety for all roadways users from Haslett Road to Grand River Avenue.

POLICE

How many officers are on a typical shift? How many are on road patrol?

There are five Officers and one Sergeant on each shift. The department also has two Traffic Safety Officers that rotate through the week. The Police Department will be fully staffed with 42 Officers after the current trainee has completed the police academy next month.

Does the Township do enough to control speeders?

The Township has dramatically increased traffic enforcement, especially the school zones around Haslett and Okemos High Schools. Overall traffic citations across the Township have increased by 350% since 2023. We do focused enforcement in other areas where there is more reported speeding. Despite greatly increased enforcement, there will never be enough resources to control speeding on all roads at all times.

Do we provide service to Williamstown Township?

Yes, Meridian Township Police provides 40 hours of police service a week to Williamstown Township. Williamstown Township does compensate the Township for this service.

Residents noticing recurring traffic safety issues are encouraged to utilize the Traffic Concern Form on the Police Department website: https://forms.meridian.mi.us/Police-Department-Forms/Traffic-Concern-Form-Police-Department

SENIOR CENTER

What is the status of the search for a location of the Meridian Senior Center?

Since the millage failed last August, the Township has pursued multiple locations for a Senior Center only facility. Given the timeframe, a focus was placed on existing vacant buildings. Unfortunately, available sites pursued were not financially feasible or were physically constrained and would not easily accommodate the use.

Township Staff continue to work on finding a temporary, as well as a permanent home for the Senior Center. Efforts include exploring the land next to the current Service Center at Gaylord C. Smith Court, along with working with the Cities of Williamston and East Lansing to allow Township residents to attend without out-of-area costs. The Township also continues to have conversations with the Okemos and Haslett Public School Districts on possible partnerships. The current Senior Center at Chippewa Middle School is scheduled for closure in May 2028, ahead of the planned demolition in June 2028.

DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Why are wooded areas being clear cut for development, when Meridian Township has numerous empty commercial properties?

The Township Board is working to balance the need for increased housing with thoughtful development. Clearing portions of property on Central Park Drive is due to the approved Authentix multi-family residential project. This project was the result of a legal consent judgement in place for several decades. The Township worked with the developer to reduce the scope of this project and minimize impacts and a substantial amount of the property is being maintained in a conservation easement. Additionally, the Township does not have many vacant commercial spaces that are not already planned for redevelopment or have tenants coming soon. Meridian Mall is also doing reasonably well, given the state of similar-sized

malls across the country. Overall, development is being pushed into the areas identified for development from the Township's Master Plan.

Is there a current Board member that has any urban planning training or degree?

No, the Township Board members do not have an urban planning degree. They are elected to represent all residents on a wide variety of diverse issues.

Is the next phase of Copper Creek starting soon?

The developer is working on the engineering plans for the next phase of approximately 20 homes.

What's happening with the vacant commercial properties?

There are current development plans for the Old Chicago building (Huntington Bank) and the former Verizon/Outshiner Car Wash (Sheetz gas station/convenience store). A new tenant is coming soon for the former Rite Aid on Grand River Avenue.

What's the status of Haslett Village Square development (SE corner of Haslett and Marsh)?

This will be a multi-year project, taking approximately two-and-a-half years for all construction. The developer is currently constructing the apartment buildings, while the existing rehabilitated building will be commercial. The townhomes will be constructed after the multi-family.

What's going on with Downtown Okemos?

The former Village of Okemos Project is not moving forward to construction. The post-pandemic inflation and civil infrastructure costs proved too great for the developer to overcome. The developer of the Village of Okemos project lost ownership of the property through receivership. The bank is working to sell the property. There are no current development plans.

The Township received an $11.35 million federal BUILD grant earlier this year to reconstruct the Okemos Road (from the bridge to Grand River Ave) and Hamilton Road (Moore Street to Liverance Street), and replace storm drains and pathways to make the downtown redevelopment ready once again. The power lines will not be buried as the cost is too great, but Consumers Energy will be required to relocate them at their cost to accommodate the widening of Okemos Road to add left turn lanes at the Hamilton Road intersection. The road project is not likely to begin construction until 2028 at the earliest. The Township is currently in the initial phases of developing the grant agreement with USDOT/FHWA. No funds can be expended under the grant until the grant agreement is in place and the Township has been informed that it can take 12-18 months to get the grant agreement executed.

ELECTIONS

I called the Township today and they said they received my voting mail in ballot, but why was I not notified that it was received even though I did leave my email?

The State of Michigan now provides voters with updates about their absentee ballot. Subscribe to ballot notifications by going to the Michigan Voter Information Center online at www.mi.gove/vote.

DATA CENTERS

What is the status with the moratorium on data centers?

Meridian Township has not been approached by anyone wishing to pursue a data center in the Township. There is currently a six-month moratorium in place. Staff and Township attorneys drafted an ordinance for data centers. Recently, the Township Board has referred the ordinance to the Planning Commission and Environmental Commission for feedback. There are very few available parcels in the Township for this use. These policies will be presented to the Township Board in late fall/early winter.

Share Feedback/Comments

Comments can always be sent anytime to the Township Board at board@meridian.mi.us. These will also be included as public communications in a Board packet following submission.