



July 28, 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 continued its annual Listening Sessions for 2026:

- **Tuesday, May 12**
 - 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm at 2142 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 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 July 28, 2026 Listening Session was attended by approximately 35 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, Treasurer Linda Burghardt, Trustees Nickolas Lentz, Kathy Ann Sundland, Peter Trezise, and Marna Wilson.

Staff then provided brief updates on the following topics:

- 2026 Township Millage Renewals, Township Manager Tim Dempsey
 - <https://www.meridian.mi.us/your-government/2026-millage-renewals/>
- Elections, Township Clerk Angela Demas
 - <https://www.meridian.mi.us/your-government/elections/>
- 2026 Local Road Program, Deputy Manager Dan Opsommer
 - <https://www.meridian.mi.us/your-government/township-projects/local-roads-program/>

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.

LOCAL ROADS PROGRAM (LRP)

Are you aware of the peeling paint on the Okemos Road Camelback Bridge?

The concrete sealant on the bridge is peeling. Deputy Manager Opsommer will discuss this with the Ingham County Road Department. The likely fix would be removing the peeling sealant with mechanical abrasion and reapplying new sealant.

The streetlight at the intersection of West Hamilton Road and Grand River Avenue is positioned to make it difficult to see Hamilton from westbound Grand River Avenue at night. Can this be improved?

Deputy Manager Opsommer has placed a request for new streetlights on Grand River Ave at the following intersections that do not currently have streetlights:

- West Hamilton Road/Grand River Avenue
- Nakoma Drive/Grand River Avenue
- Ardmore Avenue/Grand River Avenue
- Washington Heights Avenue/Grand River Avenue
- East Hamilton Road/Grand River Avenue
- Powell Road/Grand River Avenue
- Oak Pointe Court/Grand River Avenue
- Van Atta Road/Grand River Avenue
- North Meridian Road/Grand River Avenue
- South Meridian Road/Grand River Avenue

What can be done about potholes that are not filled and compacted properly, along with asphalt left in street?

The Ingham County Road Department has oversight of maintenance activities on Township roads, except for Grand River and M-78/Saginaw, which are under the Michigan Department of Transportation's jurisdiction. Please contact the Ingham County Road Department for maintenance issues at roads@ingham.org. If the issues are related to the Township's Local Road Program, contact dpw@meridian.mi.us or 517.853.4440.

When will the White Oak Drive repaving begin?

The Township still hopes to be able to resurface White Oak Drive, Wrightwind Drive, and Fox Chase between late September and November 15 of 2026. However, work on those streets may not start until spring of 2027. The timeline will not be determined until late September of 2026.

Any updates on when the Forest Hills local road work and ditch cleanout will begin?

Work in the Forest Hills neighborhood should begin in mid- to late-August.

Why are some local roads that were rated "red" when the millage first started still not fixed? What happens if all the roads are not fixed by the time the millage expires?

The road reconstruction process considers project phasing and conflict with other infrastructure projects. Projects typically start at the back of neighborhoods and work towards collector roads to avoid damaging newly paved roads. In addition, certain roads are delayed if there are pending drain, water, or sewer projects. The Township works to avoid tearing up newly paved roadways and wasting taxpayer resources.

The 2028-2029 construction season will be the last year of the program under the current millage. Extending the Local Road Program into future years will require a new road millage being approved by voters. The Township may ask the voters for a similar size millage in 2028.

Residents are encouraged to submit any Local Road Program concerns to dpw@meridian.mi.us.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Why didn't we have a fireworks display on the 4th of July weekend, but instead a drone show at Celebrate Meridian?

The decision to discontinue fireworks and transition to a drone show beginning in 2024 was based on several important considerations. First, the noise generated by fireworks can be disruptive and harmful to individuals with sensory sensitivities, those experiencing PTSD, domestic pets, and wildlife. Second, the smoke and airborne particulates produced by fireworks can negatively affect individuals with respiratory conditions.

Environmental impacts were also considered. Firework debris can remain in our parks and waterways, including Central Park South Pond, creating litter and potential impacts to wildlife and water quality. Finally, fire safety was an important consideration, particularly during periods of dry weather when the risk of fire can increase.

The date was shifted to provide more balance between other Township events in June. Staff are open to feedback on the preferred timing.

We'd like to see some additional improvements at the Meridian Historical Village, such as storage structure and phone lines.

Meridian Township has taken over the maintenance of the exterior of the buildings and has conducted a needs assessment. Improvements in recent years have included new roofs for the farmhouse, Barnes house, and the barn; upgraded electrical system at the Barnes house; new paint on the schoolhouse and chapel; and new LED lights throughout. Any additional improvements will need to fit within the Townships Capital Improvement Plan and annual budget.

What's the status of the Parks Master Plan update?

The Parks & Recreation Department has been hosting public input and stakeholder sessions, conducting a needs assessment, and surveying residents for the five-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Public input sessions were held on July 9th at Central Park Pavilion, July 30th at Harris Nature Center, and August 13th at Towner Road Park.

To access the survey, click here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WC2V5HS>

POLICE UPDATE

I rarely see police on the roads anymore. Seems like people are speeding and breaking traffic laws more than ever. Is there any discussion of adding police?

The Department has continued to increase staffing. Staffing levels have risen from 30 in 2023 to 41 as of May 18, 2026. We will be fully staffed with 42 officers after the current trainee has completed the police academy next month.

Speeding enforcement has been increased throughout the Township with special focus in the school zones around Haslett and Okemos High Schools. The Township crossing guards have been replaced by a private company which frees up officers that have been working on school crossings to help with traffic enforcement. We also have two dedicated traffic officers.

Traffic citations are up 18% this year. In 2023, a total of 1,019 traffic citations were issued but this year that may reach 4,000 written. However, the department's enforcement efforts are based on established

safety parameters and not quotas. The department issues more warnings than citations.

Explain the noise ordinance and what we can do about the super loud cars and trucks dragging through residential areas. It has become intolerable.

The Police Department did address recent drag racing on Haslett Road and the department manages these issues as they arise. However, it can be challenging to enforce as these issues arise sporadically and officers are not always present when they occur. However, we do track recurring areas and enforce accordingly.

Are there limits to the number of solicitors approved to limit disturbances? What rights do we have to limit it and actions we should take if signs are ignored?

All solicitors in the Township are required to have a license and bond, along with a completed criminal history. There is a list of the approved solicitors on the [Township website](#). They should also have credentials given to them from Meridian Township. If they do not have these credentials, please contact the Police Department and they will be addressed. Please note that religious, charitable, educational, fraternal, or political groups are exempt from licensing, but we do request applications for informational purposes.

SENIOR CENTER

What is the status 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 had layout and site constraints that made them unsuitable options. Township staff continue to work with the Haslett Public Schools and Okemos Public Schools to find a suitable replacement site. The Township is also exploring other options including its own properties such as near the Service Center. The current Senior Center at Chippewa Middle School is scheduled for closure in May 2028 ahead of demolition in June 2028.

FINANCES

Why is there a shortfall in the police and fire pension? How long has this existed? When does the Township plan to resolve the shortfall?

The Township's pension plan has been underfunded going back to at least the 1990s. This continued shortfall was a significant factor in proposing the 2017 Public Safety Millage that is up for renewal in November. Over the last 10 years, the pension funds have moved from 58% funded to 80% funded in 2025. The Township expects, if current trends hold, to reach full funding in another decade.

TAXES

We have one the higher tax rates for a Township in the State. What do we get for our taxes that other similar sized townships do not get?

Just over two-thirds of Meridian Township's General Fund expenditures are for police and fire protection. These two departments are critical to providing the Township's 45,000 residents with a safe community in which to live, work, and recreate. Township taxes also support elections, code enforcement, building inspections, planning and zoning, parks and recreation, land preservation, economic development, and the internal services that ensure all those operations can function.

Meridian Township also serves as the collection entity for all taxing authorities. Tax receipts are distributed to our four local school districts (Haslett, Okemos, East Lansing, and Williamston), the Ingham Intermediate School District, Ingham County Government, Lansing Community College (LCC), Capital Area Transit Authority (CATA), Capital Area District Library (CADL), and the Capital Region Airport Authority (CRAA). Depending on millage changes from year to year, the Township only retains 19-20% of all taxes collected. Visit the Township's website to review the flyer entitled Where Do My Property Tax Dollars Go:

<http://www.meridian.mi.us/home/showpublisheddocument/27814/638937853055570000>

DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

What are they building on the empty space at the four corners of Downtown Okemos?

The prior iteration of the project which proposed to construct a mixed-use commercial and residential complex is not moving forward. The properties at the northwest and southwest corner of Okemos and Hamilton Roads are now under receivership and controlled by the former developer's lender.

In the meantime, the Township has been working to address the significant infrastructure constraints that currently exist. The Township has received an \$11.3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation for reconstruction of Okemos Road from south of Grand River Avenue to just north of the Red Cedar bridge. The project will add a left turn lane on northbound Okemos Road to westbound Hamilton Road, and another turn lane on westbound Hamilton Road to southbound Okemos Road. This funding will remove a significant financial burden from any future development project.

Who is responsible for the cutting of trees in front of Cornell Elementary School?

Okemos Public Schools have cut the trees near Cornell Elementary School to prepare the site for demolition and construction of the new Cornell Elementary School. Schools are exempt from site plan approvals that would otherwise pertain to similar redevelopment projects. The district is aware there is a strong desire for tree replacement and does have a tree replacement plan.

ELECTIONS

Are poll watchers allowed?

Yes, poll watchers are allowed. However, there is no campaigning within 100 feet of polling locations, and they cannot film voting or ballots. Campaign materials must also remain 100 feet or further from the polling location's entrance.

How are signatures checked?

The Clerk's Office checks the signature, for match and style, against the one that is on file with Secretary of State.

DATA CENTERS

Is the Township formulating any policies/ordinances for data centers during the moratorium?

The Township Board at its May 6, 2026 meeting, placed a six-month moratorium on data centers and battery storage facilities. Township staff and attorneys are working to formulate zoning regulations to be reviewed by the Planning Commission. Any recommended ordinance changes will need to be approved by the Township Board. Proposed changes will be presented to the Township Board in late

fall or early winter. Meridian Township has not been approached by anyone wishing to pursue a data center in the Township.

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.