



Monterey Township  
**MASTER PLAN 2023**

MONTEREY TOWNSHIP, ALLEGAN COUNTY, MI

*An update to the 2015 Monterey Township Master Plan, adopted February 6, 2023.*





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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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| Zoning Administrator | Lori Castello<br><i>Professional Code Inspections of Michigan, Inc.</i> |
| Zoning Administrator | Jason Derry<br><i>Professional Code Inspections of Michigan, Inc.</i>   |

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# INTRODUCTION

The Monterey Township Master Plan was originally formulated and adopted over 40 years ago. Since then the Township Planning Commission has reviewed the development policies contained in the Plan and reaffirmed them, thus making no significant changes in the original Plan. This year (2023) the Planning Commission is again reviewing the policies in the current Plan and evaluating how they address ongoing development pressures.

As part of this review, the Township has devoted time and resources toward soliciting the thoughts and opinions of Monterey Township residents and stakeholders. This outreach effort manifested in several forms, the first of which being a Township-wide survey to identify strengths and weaknesses of life in the Township and hear input on issues and solutions. The Township published notice online and distributed links to residents with the assessor's notice. The survey was open for participation for six months and garnered responses from 23 individuals. Public input was likewise collected at several workshop public hearings throughout the process, the first of which occurred on September 12, 2022 and the last of which occurred at the adoption of this Master Plan.

As part of the planning process, the Master Plan defines those issues which are most important to a community. Using the results of the survey, an analysis of current conditions, and the Planning Commission's best effort, its members have developed this Plan to guide development over the next 10 to 15 years with reevaluation every five years. Zoning and other land use decisions that have direct and indirect impacts on the future character of the Township will be based on the policies in this Plan.



*Rolling fields of Monterey Township crops, August, 2022.*



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Building a comprehensive understanding of the needs, interests, and outlooks of Monterey Township’s residents and stakeholders is a critical aspect of the community planning process. Demographic information as provided by the U.S. Census Bureau is used in the following chapter to better illustrate this community profile and provide a basis for tailoring development goals to these needs and interests, permitting the Master Plan to act as a personalized, curated guide for the future of Monterey Township.

**Population**

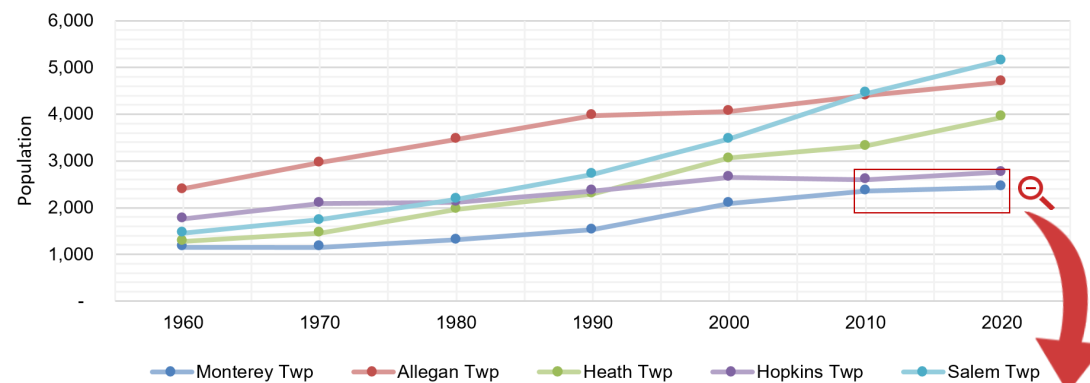
Population trends for Monterey Township, its surrounding communities, and the whole of Allegan County, for instance, are illustrated below in Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1. Data from the U.S. Decennial Census reveal that every Township and community depicted has consistently grown since 1960 at overall similar rates—approximately 15.3% per decade (or 1.53% per year) as averaged across all communities and decades. Monterey Township, however, has also consistently

|                   | 1960   | Change (%)     | 1970   | Change (%)      | 1980   | Change (%)     | 1990   | Change (%)      | 2000    | Change (%)    | 2010    | Change (%)    | 2020    |
|-------------------|--------|----------------|--------|-----------------|--------|----------------|--------|-----------------|---------|---------------|---------|---------------|---------|
| Monterey Township | 1,146  | 2<br>0.2%      | 1,148  | 172<br>15.0%    | 1,320  | 214<br>16.2%   | 1,534  | 551<br>35.9%    | 2,085   | 271<br>13.0%  | 2,356   | 80<br>3.4%    | 2,436   |
| Allegan Township  | 2,404  | 566<br>23.5%   | 2,970  | 494<br>16.6%    | 3,464  | 512<br>14.8%   | 3,976  | 78<br>2.0%      | 4,054   | 352<br>8.7%   | 4,406   | 283<br>6.4%   | 4,689   |
| Heath Township    | 1,283  | 167<br>13.0%   | 1,450  | 512<br>35.3%    | 1,962  | 335<br>17.1%   | 2,297  | 766<br>33.4%    | 3,063   | 254<br>8.3%   | 3,317   | 620<br>18.7%  | 3,937   |
| Hopkins Township  | 1,766  | 318<br>18.0%   | 2,084  | 25<br>1.2%      | 2,109  | 241<br>11.4%   | 2,350  | 301<br>12.8%    | 2,651   | -50<br>-1.9%  | 2,601   | 159<br>6.1%   | 2,760   |
| Salem Township    | 1,459  | 285<br>19.5%   | 1,744  | 439<br>25.2%    | 2,183  | 525<br>24.1%   | 2,708  | 772<br>28.5%    | 3,480   | 966<br>27.8%  | 4,446   | 710<br>16.0%  | 5,156   |
| Allegan County    | 57,729 | 8,846<br>15.3% | 66,575 | 14,980<br>22.5% | 81,555 | 8,954<br>11.0% | 90,509 | 15,156<br>16.8% | 105,665 | 5,743<br>5.4% | 111,408 | 9,094<br>8.2% | 120,502 |

**Table 2.1**

**Monterey Township Area Populations**

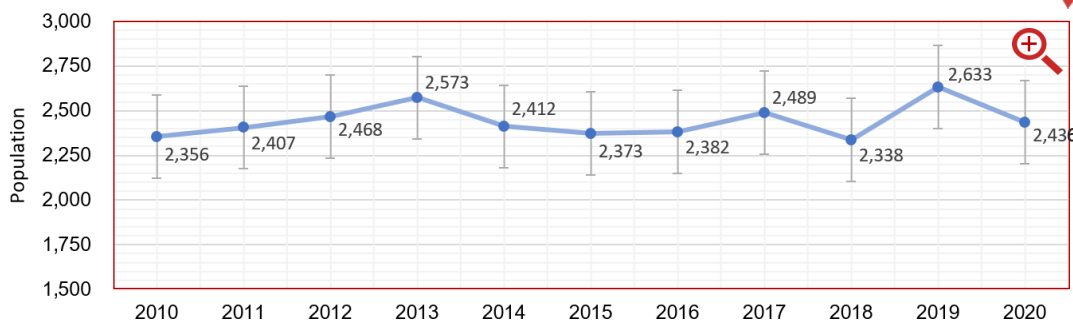
Source: Decennial Census, 1960 – 2020, U.S. Census Bureau



**Figure 2.1**

**Monterey Township Area Populations**

Source: Decennial Census, 1960 – 2020, U.S. Census Bureau



**Figure 2.2**

**Monterey Township Recent Populations (± 223 Margin of Error)**

Source: American Community Survey, 2011 – 2020, U.S. Census Bureau

lowest population of each listed community and, furthermore, a slightly lower than average growth rate—14.0% per decade (or 1.40% per year).

From 2010 to 2020, specifically, Monterey Township had the lowest decennial growth rate of any surrounding community at just 3.4% per decade (0.34% per year), nearly half that of the next slowest growing township (Hopkins Township; 6.1% per decade, 0.61% per year). While the Township has a long, historic record of record of gradual growth, the past few years have revealed a more pressing stagnation than in any surrounding communities.

A slowing rate of growth may indicate a need to turn planning attention away from fostering future development and toward the quality of life and needs of the existing population. A community less focused on accommodating and regulating new growth can afford the time and money to assess current policies for zoning and administrative processes, quality of community resources, and long-standing issues.

### Age

The median age in Monterey Township as of 2020 was 42.1 years; This metric represents an 8.3-years or 24.56% increase since 2010, wherein the median age was just 33.8—the lowest of all listed communities (Table 2.2). While 42.1 years in 2020 is not the highest median age depicted, it is both the largest numeric and percent change of all listed communities by nearly three years and ten percent. Figure 2.2 visually presents this gap in comparison to said other Townships and communities. Summarily, Monterey Township moved from a median age over three years younger than that of surrounding communities' averaged medians in 2010 to a median age over a year older than the averaged medians in 2020, representing a demographic drift aging at a nearly 1:1 rate with the passing years.

A stagnation in the replenishing of young and working class residents indicates a need to prioritize accommodations for senior citizens and their supporting families such that long-time citizens can age in place with little lifestyle disruption. A lower rate of growth as indicated in Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 on the preceding page can also compound or directly contribute to demographic drift, further corroborating the indication made by Table 2.2 and Figure 2.2 below.

**Table 2.2 (left)**

**Monterey Township  
Area Median Age, 2010  
and 2020**

Source:  
American Community 5-Year Survey,  
2010 and 2020, U.S. Census Bureau

|                   | 2010 | Change (%)     | 2020 |
|-------------------|------|----------------|------|
| Monterey Township | 33.8 | 8.3<br>24.56%  | 42.1 |
| Allegan Township  | 42.6 | 3.4<br>7.98%   | 46.0 |
| Heath Township    | 36.3 | 1.2<br>3.31%   | 37.5 |
| Hopkins Township  | 38.0 | -0.4<br>-1.05% | 37.6 |
| Salem Township    | 35.7 | 5.5<br>15.41%  | 41.2 |
| Allegan County    | 38.1 | 2.1<br>5.51%   | 40.2 |

**Figure 2.2 (right)**

**Monterey Township  
Area Median Age, 2010  
and 2020**

Source:  
American Community 5-Year Survey,  
2010 and 2020, U.S. Census Bureau

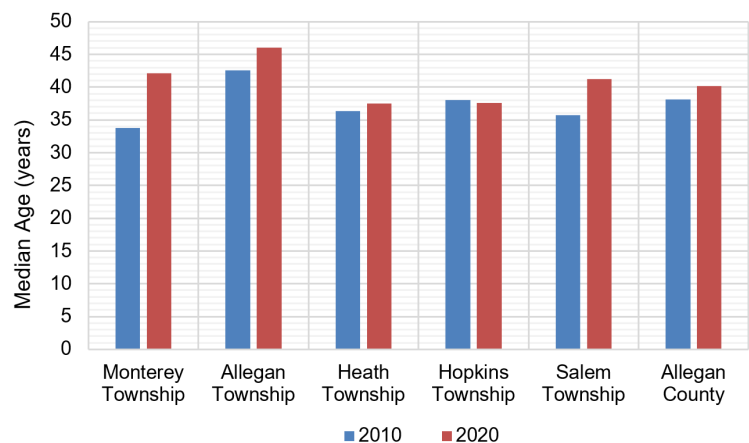


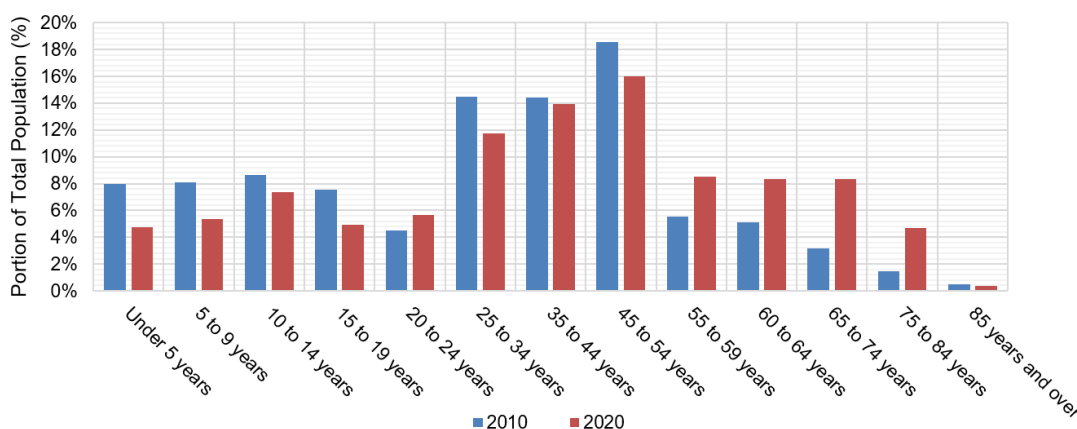


Figure 2.3 below provides a breakdown of the 2010 and 2020 Monterey Township populations by cohort. The distributions of both years provide three very distinct age groups:

- 1) *Ages 24 and under.* Respondents aged 24 years and under made up a total of 36.79% of the population in 2010; That portion decreased to just 28.10% in 2020.
- 2) *Ages 25—54 years.* Respondents aged 25 to 54 years made up a total of 47.45% of the population in 2010; That portion likewise decreased a similar percentage to 41.69% in 2020. Despite the percent decrease over the past decade, this age group consistently comprises the most populous cohort in the Township by a considerable margin—in no instances less than ten percent.
- 3) *Ages 55 and older.* Respondents aged 55 years and older made up a total of just 15.77% of the population in 2010; That portion nearly doubled to 30.21% in 2020.

Summarily, from 2010 to 2020, the portion of Monterey Township residents aged 54 years and younger decreased by 14.45% while those aged 55 years and older increased by that same amount. However, despite the unanimous decrease among younger cohorts, the three distinct age groups previously identified remain visible in that those aged 25 to 54 years still make up over forty percent of the population—over ten percent more than those aged 24 years and younger (28.10%) and 55 years and older (30.21%).

As previously established, an aging population indicates a need for increased senior-oriented infrastructure and amenities. Establishing objectives and language to encourage a Township-wide push toward this goal within the Master Plan ensures local officials and developers alike have the guidance they need to do so.



**Figure 2.3**  
**Monterey Township Population by Age, 2010 and 2020**

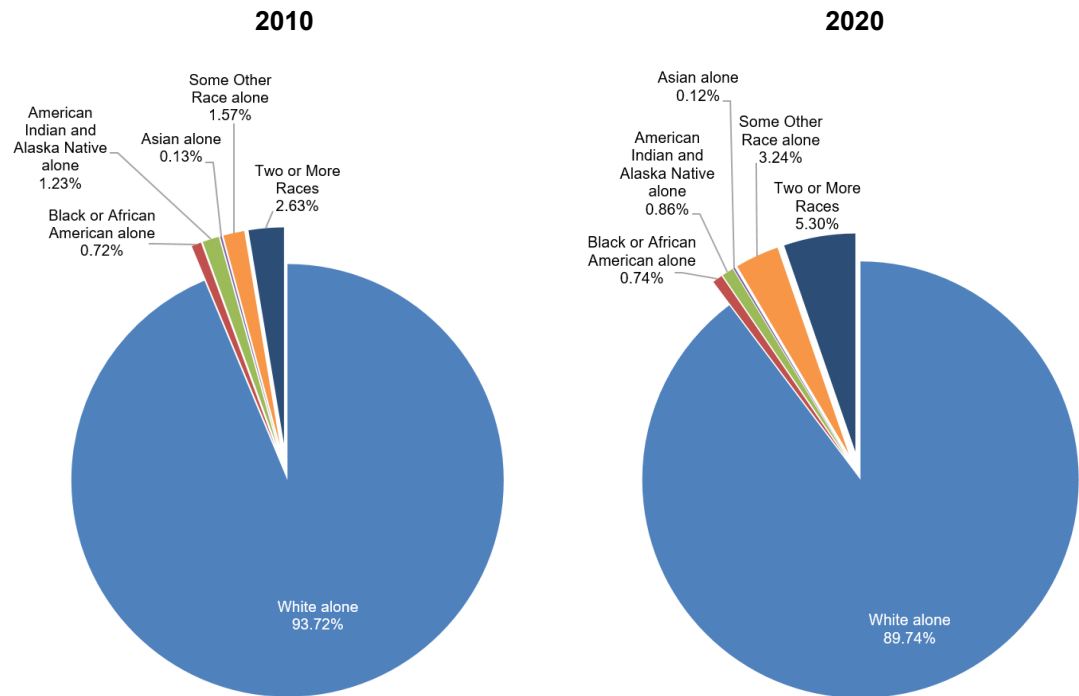
Source:  
American Community 5-Year Survey, 2010 and 2020, U.S. Census Bureau

## Race

Figure 2.4 on the following page provides a comparison of the Monterey Township populations as distributed by race in 2010 and 2020. Despite the other demographic changes seen in the past decade alone, the racial makeup of the Township is largely unchanged:

**Figure 2.4**  
**Monterey Township**  
**Population by Race,**  
**2010 and 2020**

Source:  
 Decennial Census, 2010 and  
 2020, U.S. Census Bureau



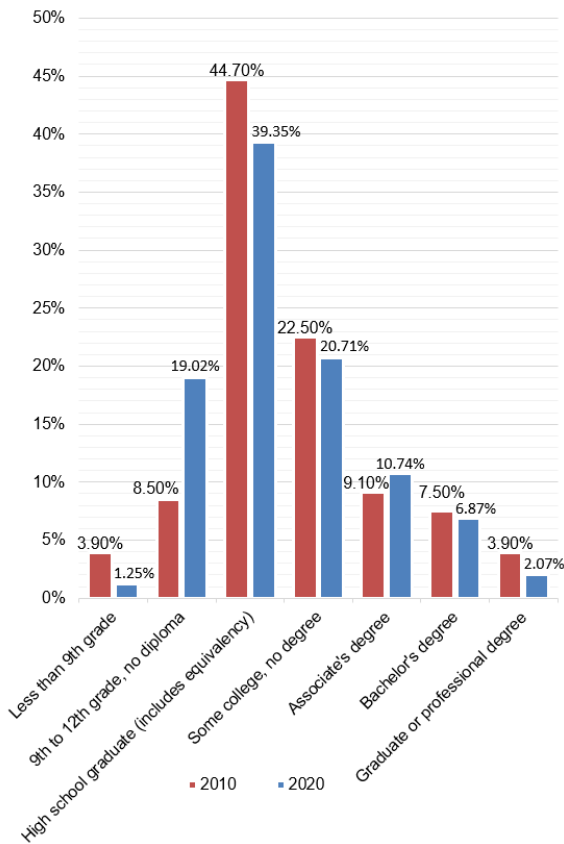
- 1) As is typical of many rural Michigan communities, the largest portion of the population identifies as *White alone*: approximately 93.72% in 2010 decreased to 89.74% in 2020—a 3.98% change.
- 2) Contrastingly, the second largest portion in both samples, respondents identifying as *Two or More Races*, made up 2.63% of the population in 2010, doubling to comprise 5.30% by 2020.
- 3) Likewise, respondents identifying as *Some Other Race* made up the third largest portion in both samples: approximately 1.57% in 2010 again doubling to 3.24% by 2020.
- 4) *American Indian and Alaskan Native* residents decreased by 0.37% over the decade, from 1.23% to 0.86%.
- 5) Lastly, *Black or African American alone* and *Asian alone* remained largely unchanged as the two smallest portions, residing at approximately 0.73% and 0.14%, respectively.

A comprehensive understanding of the racial makeup of a community can aid in identifying biases and assumptions about the population that may impact its policies and planning practices. Local government representatives and officials should acknowledge the different perspectives and backgrounds offered by a diverse set of voices as a helpful tool for exploring all possible solutions to Township issues.

### ***Educational Attainment***

Figure 2.5 to the right depicts various levels of educational attainment among respondents aged 25 years and older within the Township in both the years 2010 and 2020, illustrating the changes that have happened within that decade.

By far the largest portion of the population in both samples are *high school graduates (including equivalency)* at 44.70% in 2010 dropping down to 39.35% in



2020. These metrics are both at least double the next highest portion—*some college, no degree* at 22.50% in 2010 also dropping to 20.71% in 2020. The collective 7.14% decline among these cohorts can be found in the only two portions to increase: *9th to 12th grade, no diploma* (8.50% in 2010 to 19.02% in 2020) and *Associate's degree* (9.10% in 2010 to 10.74% in 2020). The former of these increased by 10.52%—more than doubling, while the latter increased only marginally. All other cohorts stayed largely the same but with marginal decreases of approximately one percent or less with the exception of *less than 9th grade*, or less with the exception of *less than 9th grade*, which decreased from 3.90% in 2010 to

1.25% in 2020—an approximate two-thirds decrease.

A community's distribution of educational attainment provides valuable insight into the type of available educational opportunities in the area, employment sought and provided, and values regarding post-secondary education. A community of residents with high levels of college degrees may be more likely to seek out "white-collar," information, or service occupations or commute to places with those opportunities. Likewise, a community with less post-secondary education is likely to value labor and "blue-collar" work more, thus seeking and supporting more manufacturing, natural resource, or agricultural occupations.

The trends seen within Monterey Township over the past decade indicate that the number of high school graduates and those with some college (but no degree) have decreased the most with the number of residents with no high school diploma (or equivalency) by far increasing the most. Such a combination may indicate a change in popular opinions to value early employment and labor more than higher education. However, the emerging trends also indicate that those with no high school education whatsoever have also reduced significantly and those with Associate's degrees increased slightly. Such changes suggest that obtaining some high school education has become more important to Monterey Township residents in recent years while, among those who seek post-secondary education, more are achieving two-year degrees than before. The latter of these specifically may further indicate an increase in accessibility or affordable options for obtaining two-year degrees than previously offered.

Summarily, emerging trends in educational attainment suggest that the Township should prioritize early employment opportunities and occupations for skilled labor without highly credentialed requirements. The Township should further

**Figure 2.5**

**Monterey Township Educational Attainment of Those 25 Years and Older, 2010 and 2020**

Source:  
Decennial Census, 2010 and 2020, U.S. Census Bureau



plan for expanding access to alternative post-secondary education and strengthening existing connections to further promote success rates among those who choose a higher education route.

## Industry

Table 2.3 on the page 12 illustrates the growth and decline of various industries across and around Monterey Township as recorded every two years from 2010 to 2020. Metrics are measured by the number of residents who identify as being employed in said industry regardless of whether that employment is within the Township or not.

The depicted metrics as averaged across the decade reveal the industries that saw the least and most growth on average. The overall average of every net growth and loss of the 2010s indicates that the Township lost more working residents than it gained, which aligns with the Township employed civilian population aged 16 years and over staying largely stagnant with a slight decrease in that time.

## Growth

The three industries that saw the most net growth were (in descending order):

- 1) **Public administration**—from just two employees in 2010 to 42 in 2020, a net increase of 2,000% and 40 employees. Likewise, an average biennial increase of 120.39% and eight individuals (four per year). This industry had far more net and average biennial growth than any other on record by a wide margin. Despite this, a disparity between net and average biennial growth of this magnitude is an indication that the number of industry participants was volatile during the measured years.<sup>1</sup>
- 2) **Construction**—from 121 employees in 2010 to 230 in 2020, a net increase of 90.08% and 109 employees. Alternatively, however, this industry saw an average biennial increase of just 16.94% and 21.8 employees individuals (10.6 per year).
- 3) **Professional, scientific, management, and administrative and waste management services**—Similarly, this sector experienced an unstable growth pattern across the decade. From 57 employees in 2010 to 93 in 2020, a net growth of 63.76% and 36 employees, but an average biennial increase of 11.35% and 7.2 individuals (3.6 per year). Like *construction*, this sector went from losing seven employees between 2012 — 2014 to gaining 25 between 2018 — 2020, indicating drastic shifts in occupation over the decade.

## Loss

The three industries that saw the most net loss were (in descending order):

- 1) **Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining**—from 97 employees in 2010 to 16 in 2020, a net decrease of -83.51% and -81 employees. Likewise, an average biennial increase of 120.39% and eight individuals (negative-four per year).

### <sup>1</sup>Volatility Index:

A steady rate of change throughout the measured decade appears as an average biennial change of approximately one-fifth of the net change. Comparing the average biennial change to the net change as divided by five results in a representation of the stability of the sector where by more like numbers represent stability and further numbers represent volatility.

<sup>2</sup>“What is the lowest level of unemployment the economy can sustain?”. U.S. Federal Reserve, September 16, 2020

[https://www.federalreserve.gov/faqs/economy\\_14424.htm](https://www.federalreserve.gov/faqs/economy_14424.htm)

- 1) *Wholesale trade*—from 39 employees in 2010 to 22 in 2020, a net decrease of -43.59% and -17 employees. Likewise, an average biennial increase of -5.09% and -3.4 individuals (-1.7 per year). This industry had a volatility index of 0.71, referring to a severe number of increases and decreases between years such as 2010 — 2012 (-17) and 2014 — 2016 (+9).
- 2) *Educational services, and health care and social assistance*—from 270 employees in 2010 to 160 in 2020, a net decrease of -40.74% and -110 employees. Likewise, an average biennial increase of -9.30% and -22 individuals (-11 per year).

Unemployment rates further serve as a measure of industry and employment health within a Township’s labor force. Figure 2.6 on the following page depicts unemployment rates biennially across Monterey Township, its surrounding communities, and the whole of Allegan County. The U.S. Federal Reserve cites five (5%) percent as the traditionally accepted rate of employment at which an economy can healthily operate under—in other words, it is the goal to maintain an unemployment rate at approximately five (5%) percent.<sup>2</sup> Figure 2.6 illustrates that unemployment across the board has been steadily decreasing since 2010, a likely side effect of the greater economy’s recovery from the 2008 Recession. The advent of COVID-19 in the United States in spring of 2020, however, reversed this trend in many communities, though among those included here, only Monterey and Heath Townships were drastically affected with Hopkins Township just slightly affected, too. Outside of these trends, Monterey Township also saw a spike of nearly two percent between 2012 — 2014 where most other communities stayed stagnant or declined. Among these unemployment rates, when averaged over the decade, Monterey Township has the second closest unemployment rate closest unemployment rate to five (5%)

**Table 2.3 (below)**

**Monterey Township  
Employment by  
Industry, 2010 – 2020**

Source:  
Decennial Census, 2010 and  
2020, U.S. Census Bureau

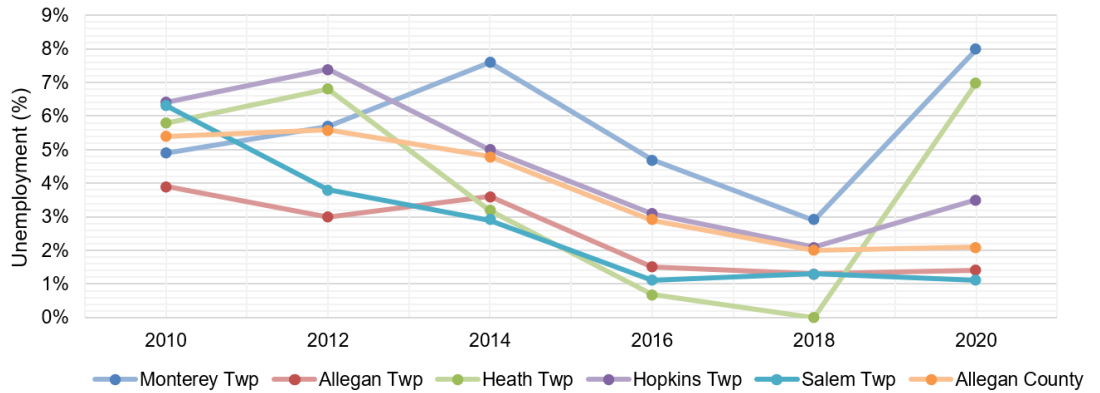
|  | 2010  | Change (%)     | 2012  | Change (%)     | 2014  | Change (%)     | 2016  | Change (%)     | 2018  | Change (%)     | 2020  |
|--|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| Civilian employed population 16 years and over   | 1,237 | -121<br>-9.78% | 1,116 | -38<br>-3.41%  | 1,078 | 143<br>13.27%  | 1,221 | -25<br>-2.05%  | 1,196 | 29<br>2.42%    | 1,225 |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining                                     | 97    | -57<br>-58.76% | 40    | 2<br>5.0%      | 42    | 10<br>23.81%   | 52    | -30<br>-57.69% | 22    | -6<br>-27.27%  | 16    |
| Construction   | 121   | 7<br>5.79%     | 128   | -22<br>-17.19% | 106   | 47<br>44.34%   | 153   | -4<br>-2.61%   | 149   | 81<br>54.36%   | 230   |
| Manufacturing  | 332   | -55<br>16.57%  | 277   | 39<br>14.08%   | 316   | 41<br>12.97%   | 357   | -28<br>-7.84%  | 329   | 33<br>10.03%   | 362   |
| Wholesale trade  | 39    | -17<br>-43.59% | 22    | 0<br>0%        | 22    | 9<br>40.91%    | 31    | 5<br>16.13%    | 36    | -14<br>-38.89% | 22    |
| Retail trade   | 122   | 1<br>0.82%     | 123   | -24<br>-19.51% | 99    | 19<br>19.19%   | 118   | 23<br>19.49%   | 141   | -41<br>-29.08% | 100   |
| Transportation and warehousing, utilities  | 37    | -4<br>-10.81%  | 33    | -7<br>-21.21%  | 26    | 27<br>103.85%  | 53    | 5<br>9.43%     | 58    | -31<br>-53.45% | 27    |
| Information  | 6     | 1<br>16.67%    | 7     | 9<br>128.57%   | 16    | -8<br>-50.0%   | 8     | 8<br>100%      | 16    | -11<br>-68.75% | 5     |
| Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing                              | 31    | -3<br>-9.86%   | 28    | -15<br>-53.57% | 13    | 25<br>192.31%  | 38    | 4<br>10.53%    | 42    | -2<br>-4.76%   | 40    |
| Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services | 57    | 5<br>8.77%     | 62    | -7<br>-11.29%  | 55    | 8<br>14.55%    | 63    | 5<br>7.94%     | 68    | 25<br>36.76%   | 93    |
| Education services, and health care social assistance                                      | 270   | -2<br>-0.74%   | 268   | -61<br>-22.76% | 207   | -21<br>-10.14% | 186   | -35<br>-18.82% | 151   | 9<br>5.96%     | 160   |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services                   | 78    | 9<br>11.54%    | 87    | 17<br>19.54%   | 104   | -23<br>-22.12% | 81    | 1<br>1.23%     | 82    | -13<br>-15.85% | 69    |
| Other services, except public administration   | 45    | -14<br>-31.11% | 31    | 18<br>58.06%   | 49    | -2<br>-4.08%   | 47    | 12<br>25.53%   | 59    | 0<br>0%        | 59    |
| Public administration  | 2     | 8<br>400%      | 10    | 13<br>130%     | 23    | 11<br>47.83%   | 34    | 9<br>26.47%    | 43    | -1<br>-2.33%   | 42    |

percent at 5.63%, just 0.22% further than Hopkins Township (4.58%). The third and fourth closest communities were Heath Township (3.92%) and Allegan County (3.8%), respectively.

Summarily, unemployment rates do not describe how many jobs within the Township are unfilled, but rather how many residents within the Township did not have jobs both *within* and *not within* the Township. A high unemployment rate can indicate signs of difficulty commuting to employers, a lack of employers closer to home, poor education programs or facilities, and inadequate access to healthcare.

**Figure 2.6**  
**Monterey Township**  
**Area Unemployment,**  
**2010 – 2020**

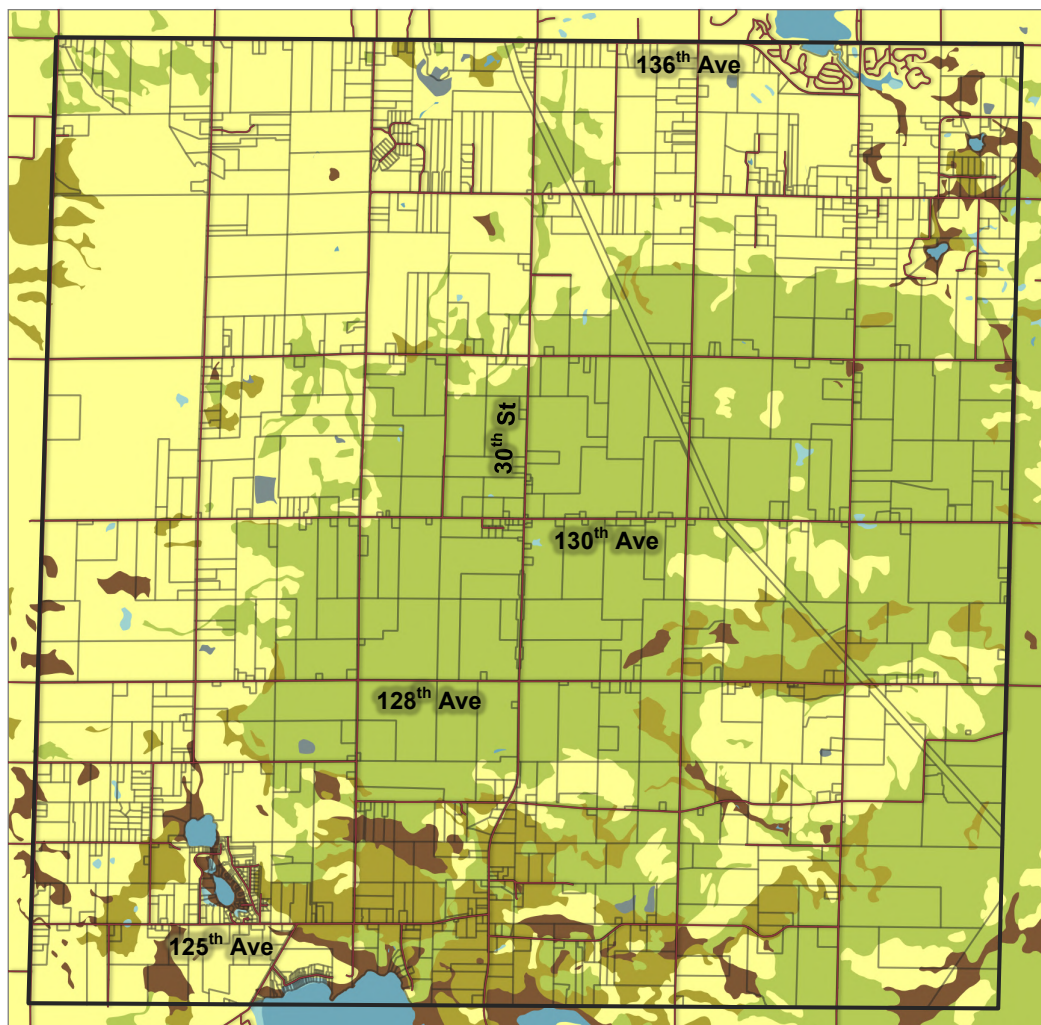
Source:  
 Decennial Census, 2010 and  
 2020, U.S. Census Bureau



The environment in which a rural community resides heavily influences nearly every facet of life for its residents: Soil conditions determine ease of development and feasibility of select crops within the agricultural industry, topography affects commute routes, sense of privacy, and mineral extraction potential, and available surface water impacts recreational and tourism opportunities.

### Soils

Map 2 below illustrates Township soils classifications generalized into their major divisions. The majority of the Township consists of sandy and loamy soils, with the former making up much of the west, northwest, and north side of the Township and the latter making up the central, east, and southeast sides. While sandy soils are generally well-regarded in terms of septic performance and buildability, loamy soils are considered the ideal mix for their even mix of characteristics. Despite this, the Township's densest development trends near the bodies of water to the northeast and south, where soils tend to be wetter.



### LEGEND

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Sand  | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #8ebf42; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Complex | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #a6d8e6; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Aquents and Histosols | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #4682b4; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Water |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #90ee90; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Loam | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #8b4513; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Muck    | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #696969; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Other                 |   |

1 0 1 mi



**Map 3.1**

### Monterey Township Soil Suitability

Source:

USDA NRCS Soil Classification,  
U.S. Department of Agriculture



<sup>1</sup>USDA Prime Farmland

Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is also available for these uses. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce economically sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods, including water management.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS)

[https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/null/?cid=nrcs143\\_014052](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/null/?cid=nrcs143_014052)

*USDA Prime Farmland*

Map 2.3 below indicates areas within the Township designated as prime farmland<sup>1</sup> by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

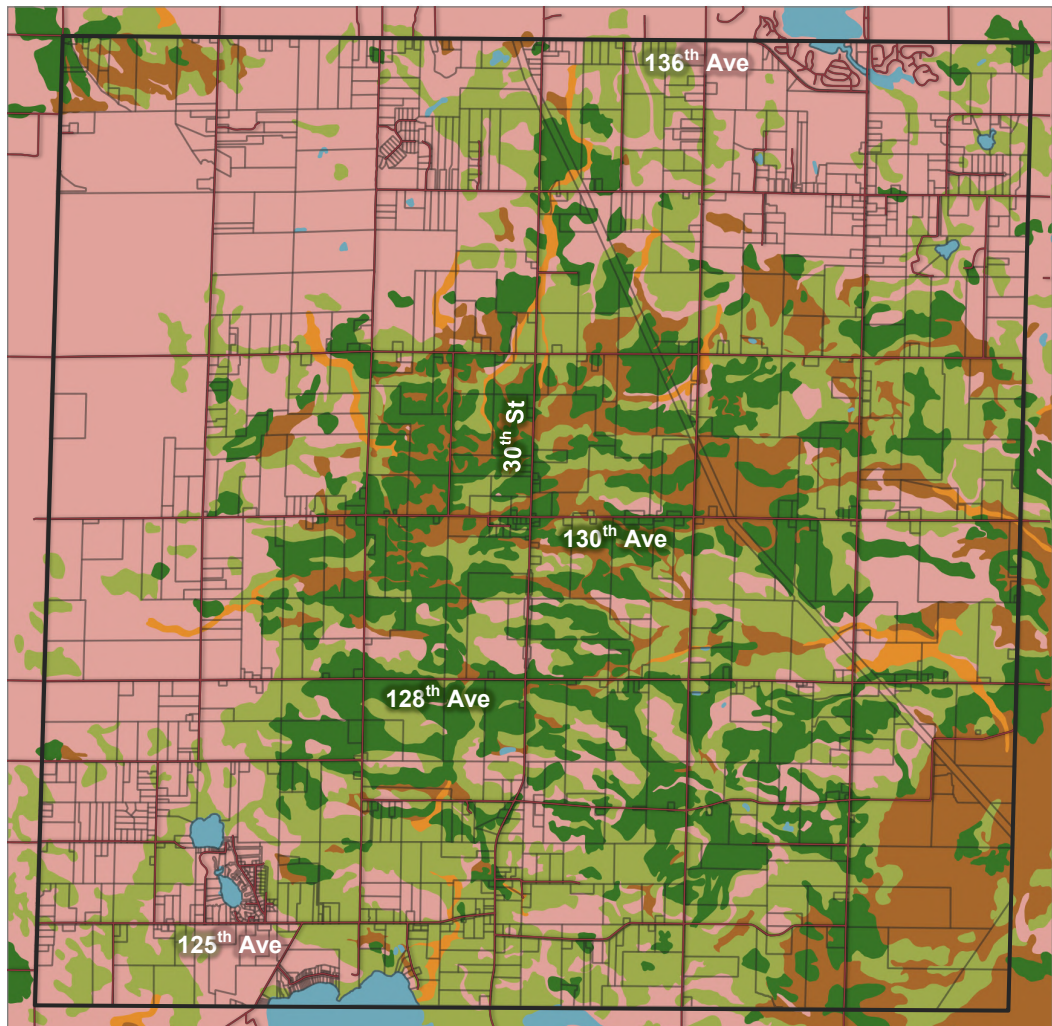
Soil considered suitable for development is likewise often suitable as farmland for similar reasons. This is reflected in Monterey Township’s farmland topography wherein the most suitable areas correlate with loamy soils (Map 3.3); This distribution covers several major corridors including 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Street, creating conflict among landowners wishing to develop their highly-trafficked farmland and those who would rather see it preserved. Further pressure comes from the State-owned forestland on its west side, eliminating nearly three square miles of potentially buildable or farmable land. For these reasons and more, one of the Master Plan’s purposes is to steer the management of these two dichotomous land uses such that development can unfold harmoniously within the agricultural community.

Map 3.2

**Monterey Township  
USDA Prime Farmland**

Source:

USDA NRCS Soil Classification, U.S. Department of Agriculture



**LEGEND**

- Prime Farmland
- Farmland of Local Importance
- Prime Farmland (if drained)
- Prime Farmland (if drained and either protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season)
- Not Prime Farmland
- Water

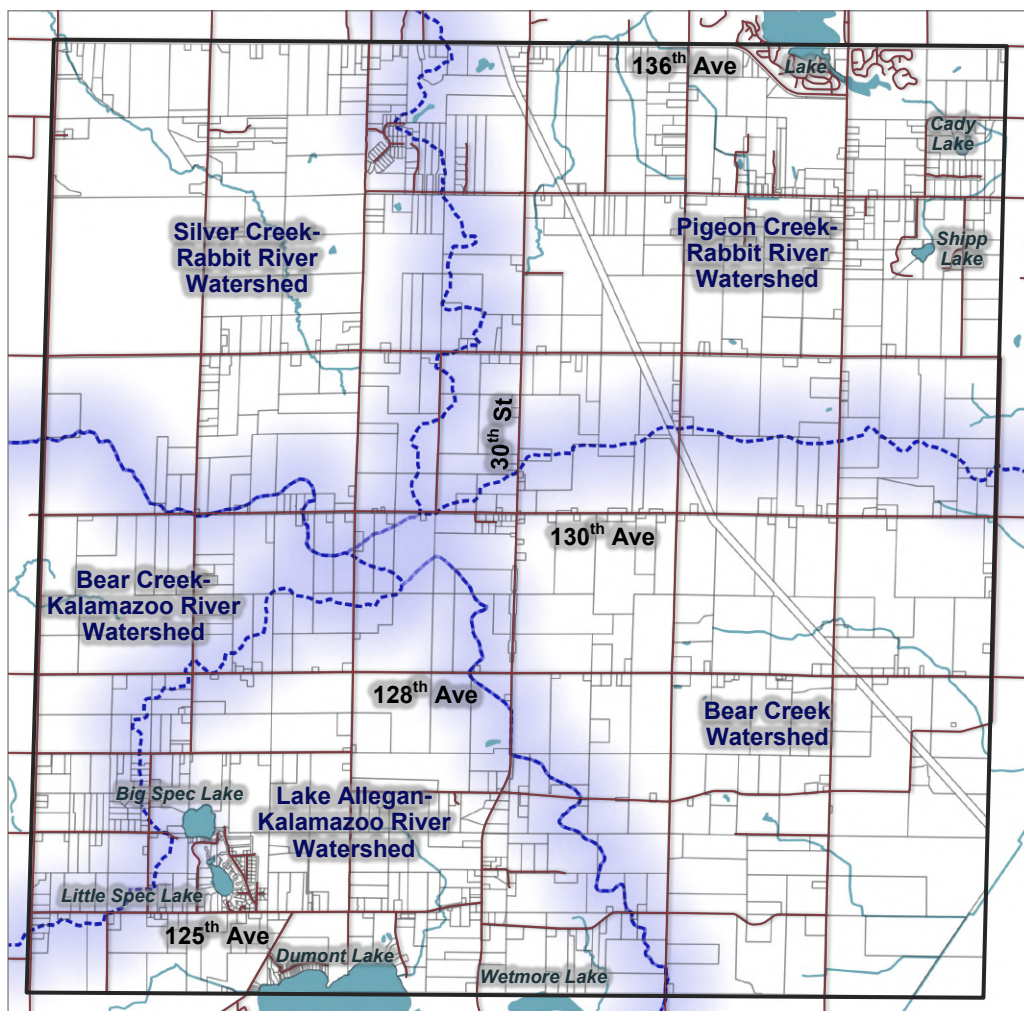


## Hydrology

While no part of the Rabbit River traverses Monterey Township, approximately half of the Township lies within the Rabbit River Watershed, most of which is north of 130th Avenue. Several prominent tributaries, however, do originate in or cross Monterey Township, including Miller Creek, Pickle Drain, and Moored Drain. The southeast quarter of the Township drains to Bear Creek, the southwest drains to Bear Creek and Kalamazoo River, and due south drains to Lake Allegan and the Kalamazoo River.

Prominent lakes in Monterey Township include the northern part of Dumont Lake, the southern tip of Lake Monterey, and Big and Little Spec Lakes in the Township's southwest. These bodies collectively account for approximately 0.3 square miles of surface water out of the Township's thirty-six total square miles, or just 0.83 percent; Monterey Township ranks 17<sup>th</sup> out of Allegan County's twenty-four Townships for most inland surface water per square mileage.

As lakes tend to generate large amounts of tourism and development attraction, Monterey Township should carefully consider the impacts its riparian land use policies can have on the community's future.



## LEGEND

Water      Watershed Boundaries



Map 3.3

Monterey Township  
Watersheds and  
Surface Water

Source:  
USDA NRCS Soil Classification,  
U.S. Department of Agriculture



## Floodplains and Wetlands

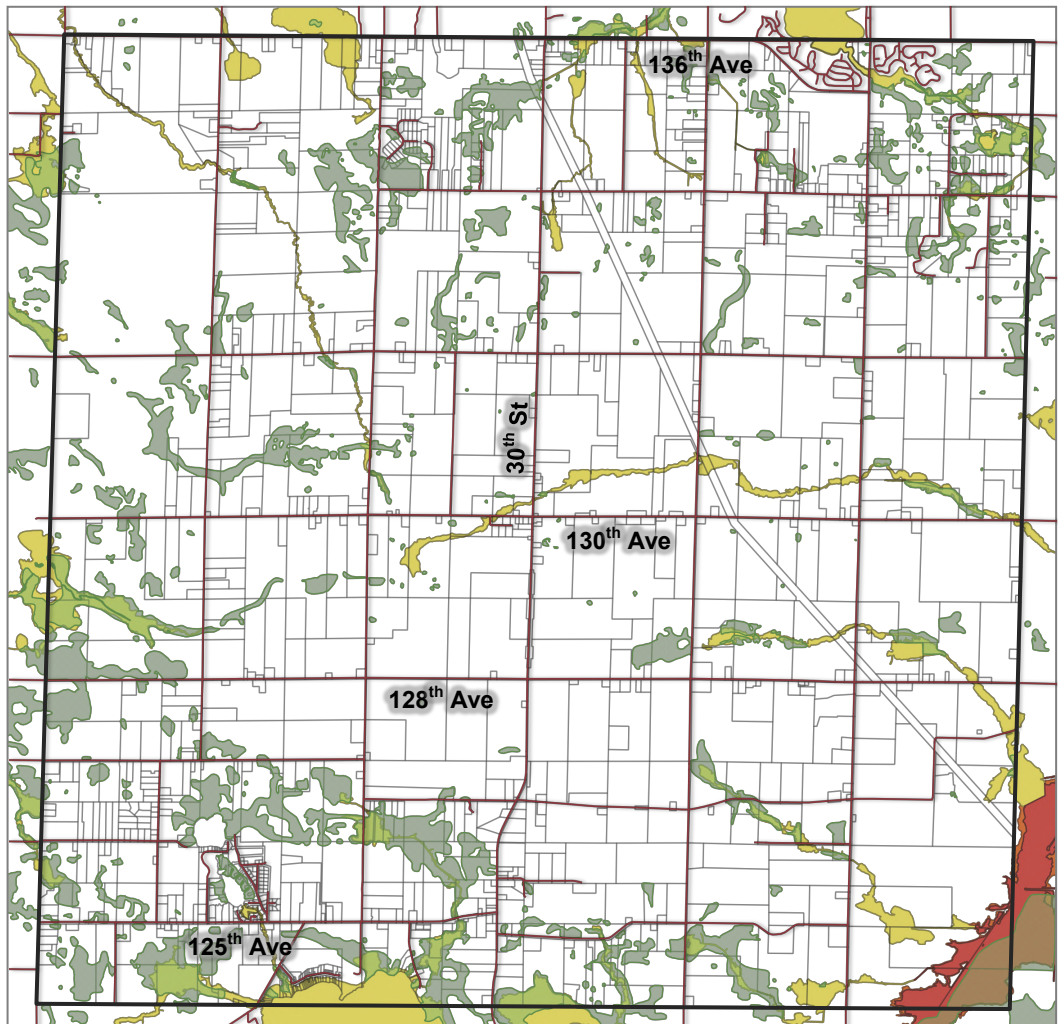
As an extension of the hydrological data presented in Map 2.3, the map below illustrates Monterey Township land residing within FEMA-designated national flood hazard areas and National Wetland Inventory designated wetlands. Both federally recognized statuses provide insight into locations and patterns of Monterey Township's most sensitive surface water and habitats.

Much of the Township's wetlands tend to accumulate on the north, west, and far south sides with the center-east sections remaining largely dry. Medium-hazard floodplains tend to fall in similar places, but with noteworthy strips traversing the eastern sections and following established creeks and drains. The far southeast corner presents evidence of the lowlands in the area, with a high-hazard 100-year floodplain covering the Bear Creek and surrounding farmland.

These sensitive areas tend to correlate with areas of mucky or complex soils (Map 2.1), suggesting that, in addition to their ecological sensitivity, they are not likely to be conducive to intense development.

**Map 3.4**  
**Monterey Township**  
**Floodplains and**  
**Wetlands**

Source:  
National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL),  
FEMA;  
National Wetlands Inventory, EGLE



### LEGEND

- 500-year Floodplain (0.2%)
- 101 – 499-year Floodplain (0.21 – 0.99%)
- 100-year Floodplain (1%)
- Wetlands

1 0 1 mi



## SURVEY RESULTS & ANALYSIS

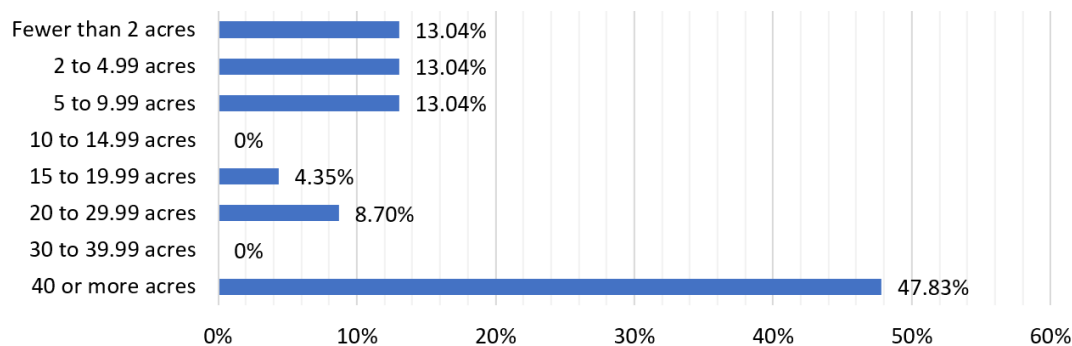
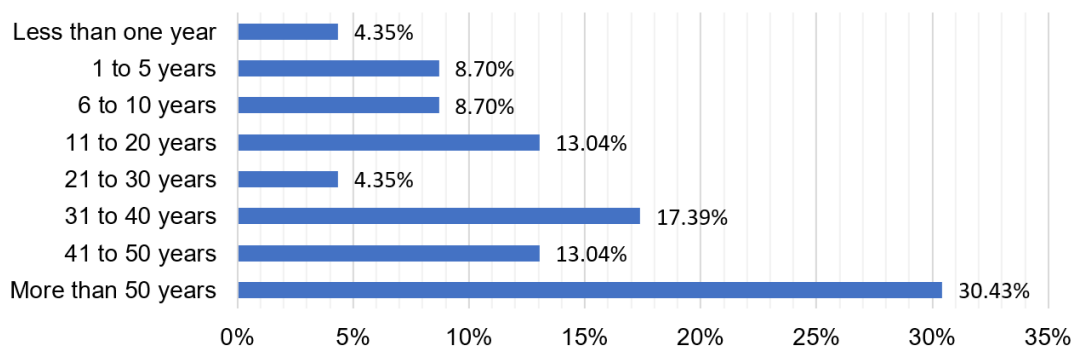
As part of the Master Plan creation process, Monterey Township area residents and stakeholders were asked to participate in a survey that would help inform and guide key such components of the document as its goals, objectives, and Future Land Use Map. Completing the survey is the quickest and most convenient way for stakeholders to make their observations and preferences known while building comprehensive data to support any subsequent changes to Township policy.

This survey comprised eight questions divided into three sections asking participants about their backgrounds, perspectives, and opinions respectively on such popular topics as growth, infrastructure, recreation, amenities, and more.

### Survey Results

The first section (Questions 1 – 4) is intended to collect information about the types of people who respond to the survey. Knowing which demographics and groups are sharing their opinions will help the Township determine what certain stakeholders and cohorts are interested in and better align priorities accordingly.

Questions 1 and 2 below reveal that the overwhelming majority of respondents (23) have both lived in Monterey Township for more than fifty years and live on forty or more acres. However, there is still a considerable spread of respondents who have lived in the Township from just one year to fifty years, many of which on land from fewer than two acres to ten acres. This distinct gap in property sizes represents the success of the Township’s farmland preservation efforts to keep farmland tracts large and residential tracts small to decrease wasted farmable area. These trends also follow those indicated in the U.S. Census data included in Chapter 2 of this Master Plan (Figure 2.3) whereby the average age of Monterey



#### Question 1.

*“How many years have you and/or your family resided in Monterey Township?”*

Total Responses: 23

#### Question 2.

*“How many acres in area is the lot on which you and/or your family live?”*

Total Responses: 23



**\*Active Farm (Question 4)**

Land operated as a single unit for agricultural production by the owner operator, manager, or tenant farmer, by his own labor or with the assistance of members of his household or hired employees; also including establishments operated as bona fide greenhouses, nurseries, orchards, chicken hatcheries, poultry farms, and apiaries.

Township residents is increasing. As such, many of those aging residents are likely to be long-time community members and property owners, having inherently owned their land for an increasing amount of time.

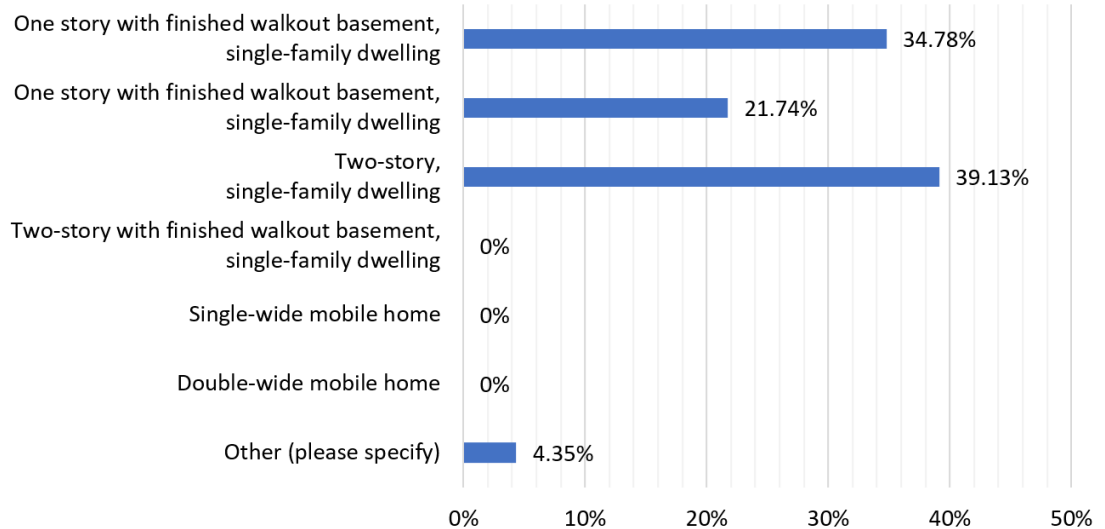
Questions 3 and 4 below exhibit the types of dwellings and property statuses respondents live on. Out of twenty-three responses, just over half live in single-story dwellings, 21.74% of which have walkout basements. Another third of respondents live in two-story dwellings, none of which have walkout basements. No participants responded as living in mobile homes of any kind. Meanwhile, over two-thirds of respondents identified themselves as living on an active farm (as defined in the sidebar to the right), while just 4.53% identified as living in a residential subdivision. Alternatively, 21.74% identified their property as not being part of an active farm or residential subdivision. These results suggest that participants largely live in farmhouses either on active arms or among active farms on an unfarmed parcel.

Section 2, consisting of Questions 5 and 6 on pages 20 and 21, identifies participants' perceptions of the current state of Monterey Township. Respondents were asked to check up to five aspects of life in the Township they deemed the most positive and, subsequently, the most negative. The three most popular *positive* aspects of life in the Township are the active farming (82.61%), the amount/quality of natural features/open space (78.26%), and its rural

**Question 3.**

*“How would you best describe the type of dwelling in which you and/or your family live?”*

Responses: 23

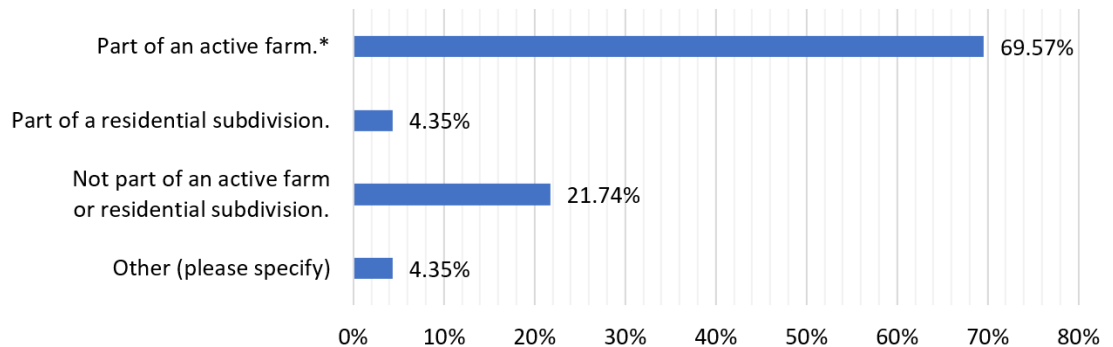


**Other Responses:** *“Half farmhouse half log cabin. Two story. Single family”*

**Question 4.**

*“How would you best categorize the lot on which you and/or your family live?”*

Responses: 23

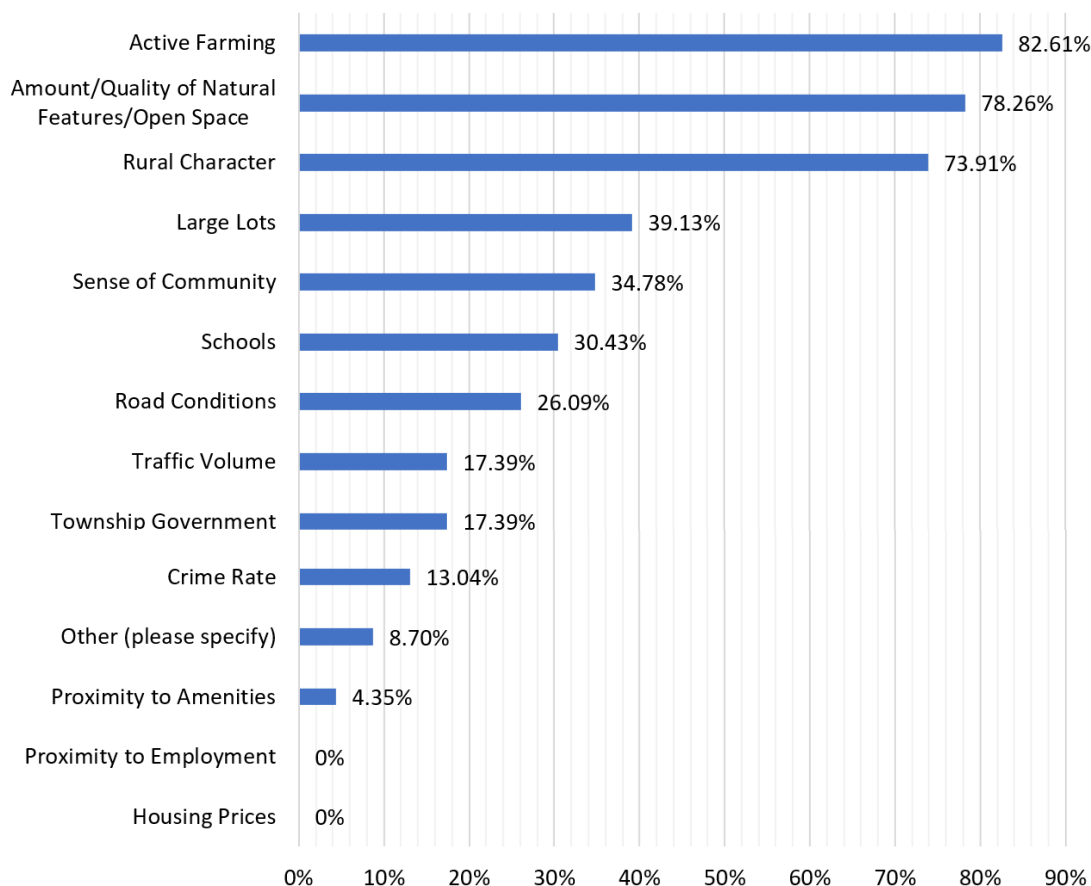


**Other Responses:** *“Rural estate”*

### Question 5.

*“What aspects of living in Monterey Township do you find the most desirable (please select up to five answers)?”*

Total Responses: 23



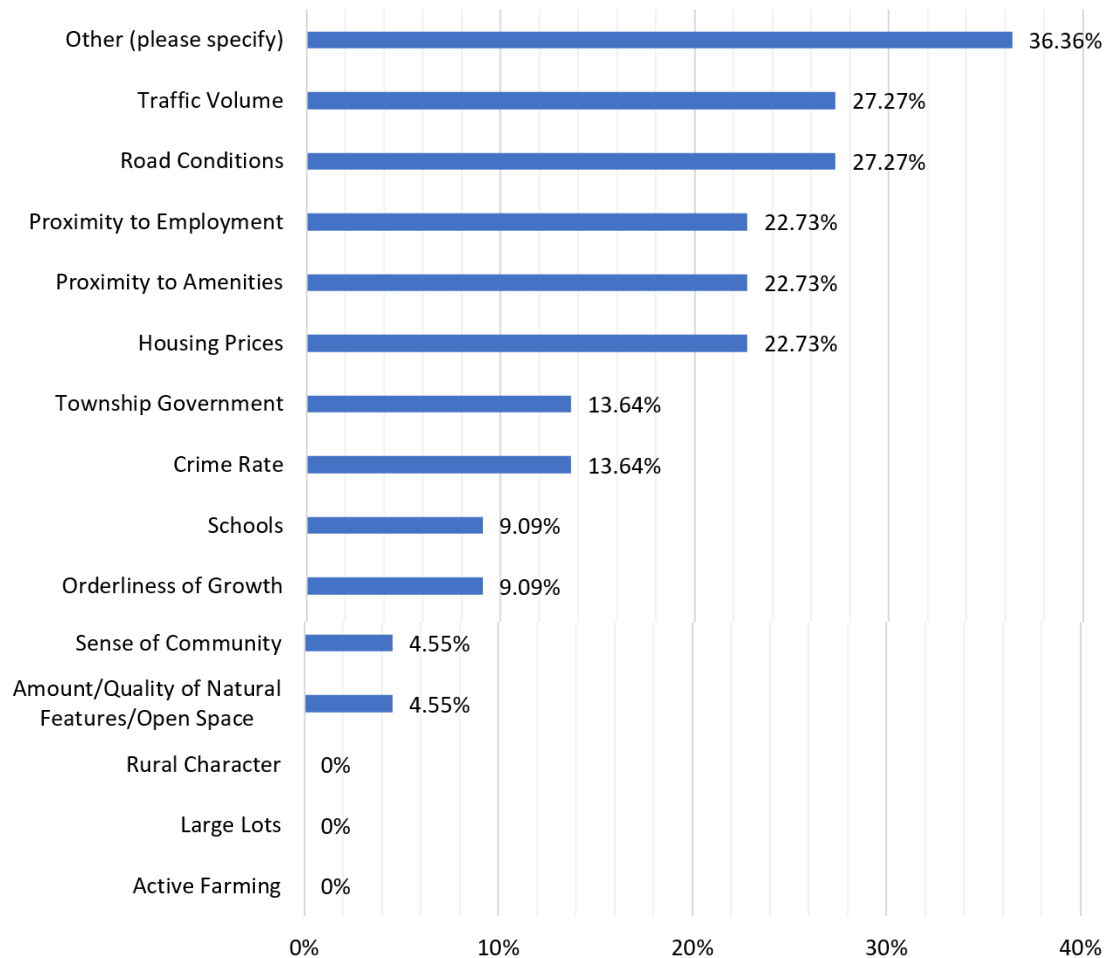
character (73.91%). The next highest responses are large lots, a sense of community, and the schools, all garnering around one-third of responses. Conversely, aspects that received little to no responses include proximity to amenities (4.35%), proximity to employment (0%), and housing prices (0%). These results again reinforce the trend by which respondents are attracted to the openness and quiet nature of the Township rather than its amenities and relationship with surrounding communities.

Simultaneously, the three most frequently selected *negative* aspects of life in Monterey Township (seen in Question 6 on the following page) include a catalogue of other-specified responses (36.36%), traffic volume (27.27%), and road conditions (27.27%). Other-specified responses include such topics as the rate of new development in the Township being too high, negative impacts from snowmobile trails, and a corroboration of a respondent’s lack of perceived grievances. Tied at 22.73% of responses, the fourth and fifth most frequently selected negative aspects of the Township are proximity to employment and amenities. This correlates loosely and inversely with the distribution of positive aspects in the previous chart, further supporting the trend wherein respondents dislike the commute time to necessities. Similarly, no participants identified rural character, large lots, or active farming as negative aspects of the Township. This, too, correlates inversely with the response distribution in the previous chart, further supporting the conclusion that stakeholders are satisfied with the overall agricultural nature of their community.

**Question 6.**

*“What aspects of living in Monterey Township do you find the least desirable (please select up to five answers)?”*

Responses: 22



**Other Responses:** *“The large rate of new houses being built in the area, trying to make our home like the next new big city”*

*“None”*

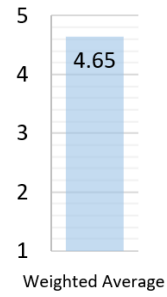
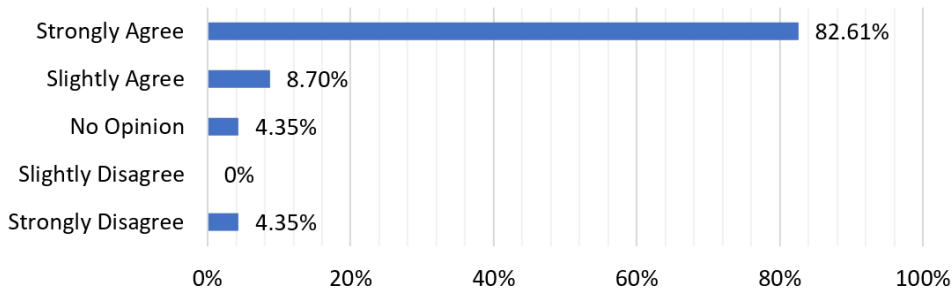
*“It’s perfect the way it is. It scares me deeply to see big developments and subdivisions come in. People live in Monterey because they like this style of life. This isn’t Byron center. We should keep it that way.”*

*“Snowmobile trails”*

The responses gathered in these questions suggest that the Township should consider reinforcing and further supporting its agricultural preservation policies such that the rural character and low population density of the community can best continue.

Question 7 is composed of fourteen sub-questions whereby respondents are prompted to rank their agreement with a statement on a scale of one (*Strongly Disagree*) to five (*Strongly Agree*).

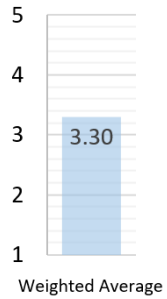
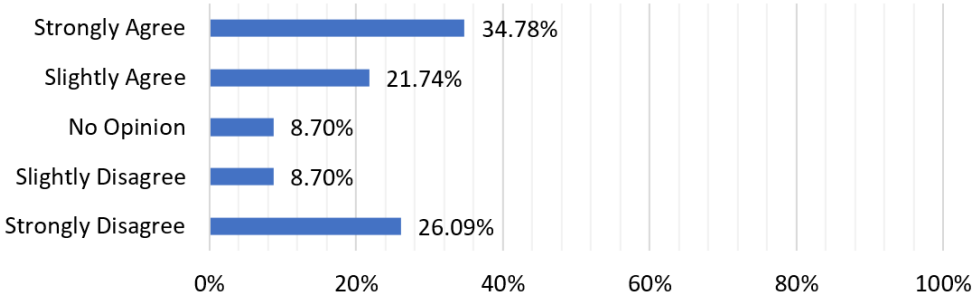
The distribution of answers across Question 7 further support the trends emerging in previous questions. Among the most highly-agreed upon statements are Questions 7.1 (*“Monterey Township should preserve its rural character.”*), 7.4 (*“Neighborhood shopping facilities (such as grocery stores, drug stores, dry cleaners, etc.) should be concentrated in the nearby Cities and Villages.”*), 7.7 (*“Preservation of the natural environment (e.g. wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitat, groundwater, etc.) should be a top priority.”*), 7.8 (*“Protection of the Rabbit River corridor is important.”*), and 7.10 (*“Monterey Township should enact regulations that preserve its natural features.”*).



**Question 7.1**

*“Monterey Township should preserve its rural character.”*

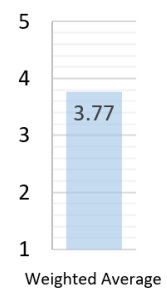
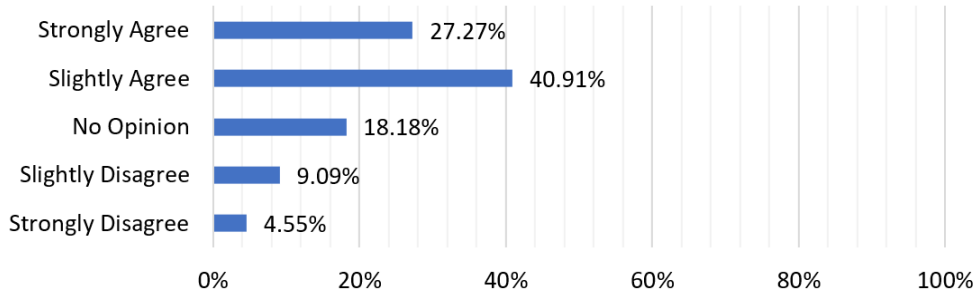
Responses: 23



**Question 7.2**

*“Certain parts of Monterey Township should be designed for growth and other parts should be kept as they are now.”*

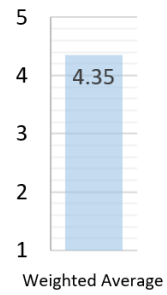
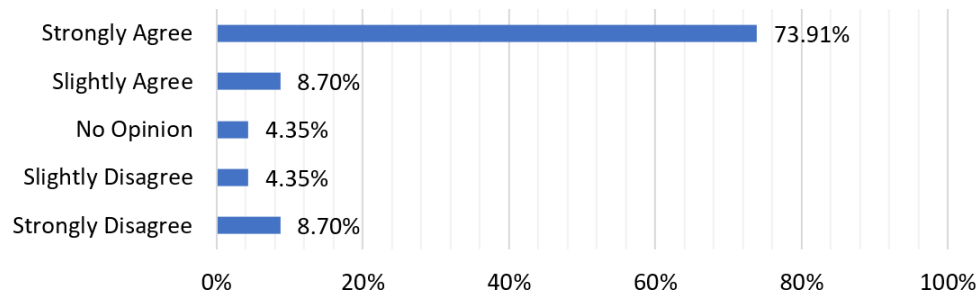
Total Responses: 23



**Question 7.3**

*“Housing in Monterey Township is affordable.”*

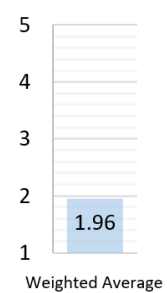
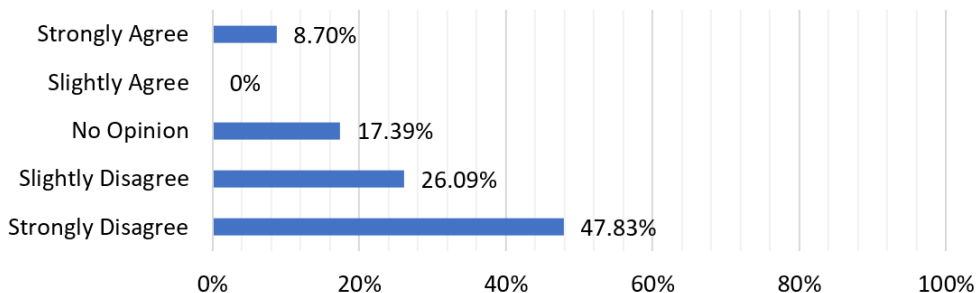
Total Responses: 22



**Question 7.4**

*“Neighborhood shopping facilities (such as grocery stores, drug stores, dry cleaners, etc.) should be concentrated in the nearby Cities and Villages.”*

Total Responses: 23



**Question 7.5**

*“More economic and employment opportunities are needed in the Monterey Township area.”*

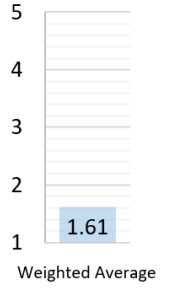
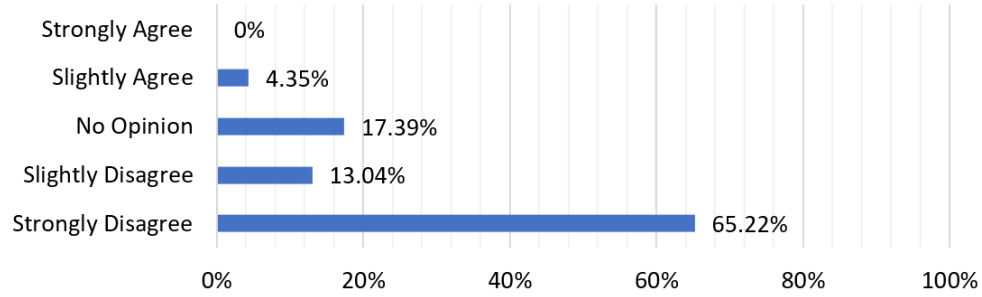
Total Responses: 23



**Question 7.6**

*“Monterey Township needs more housing.”*

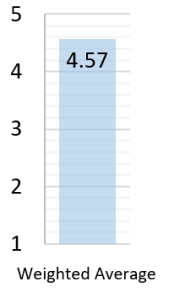
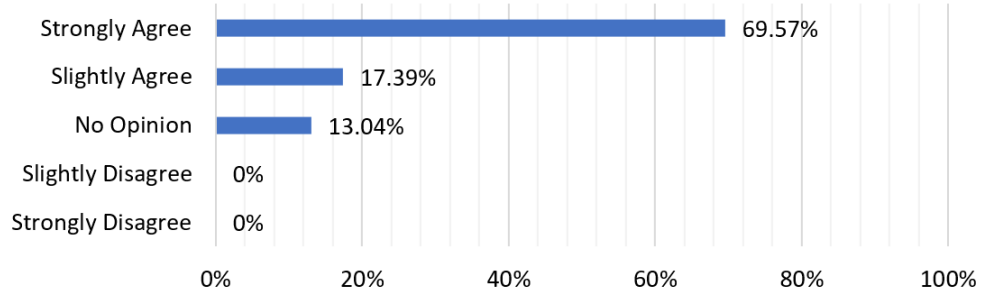
Total Responses: 23



**Question 7.7**

*“Preservation of the natural environment (e.g. wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitat, groundwater, etc.) should be a top priority.”*

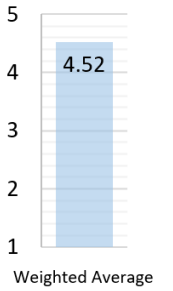
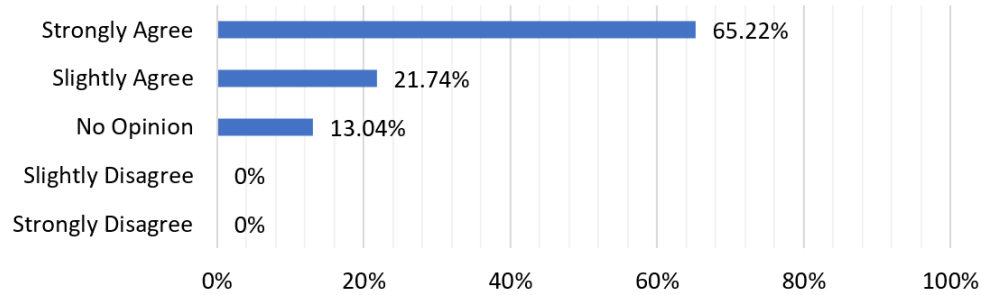
Responses: 23



**Question 7.8**

*“Protection of the Rabbit River corridor is important.”*

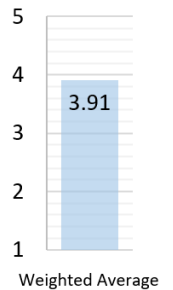
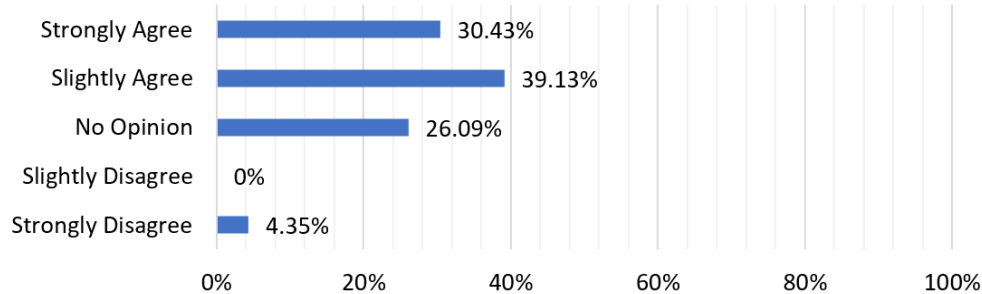
Responses: 23



**Question 7.9**

*“There needs to be more communication between Monterey Township and its residents such as a newsletter.”*

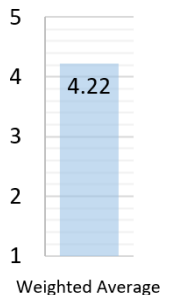
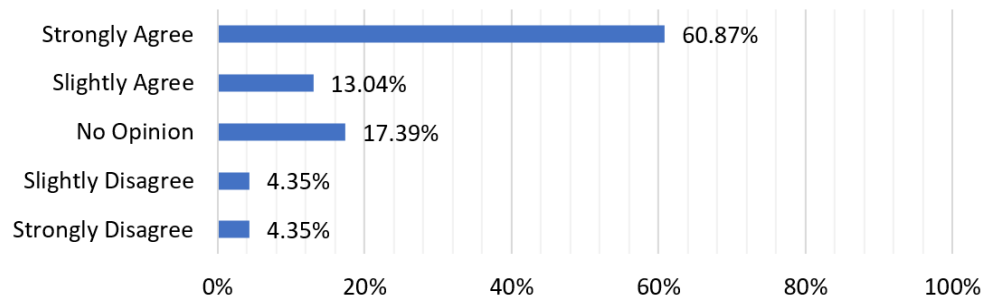
Responses: 23

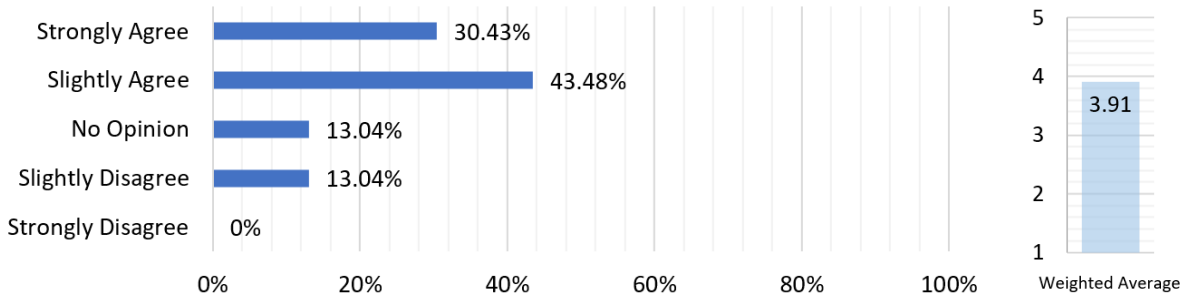


**Question 7.10**

*“Monterey Township should enact regulations that preserve its natural features.”*

Responses: 23

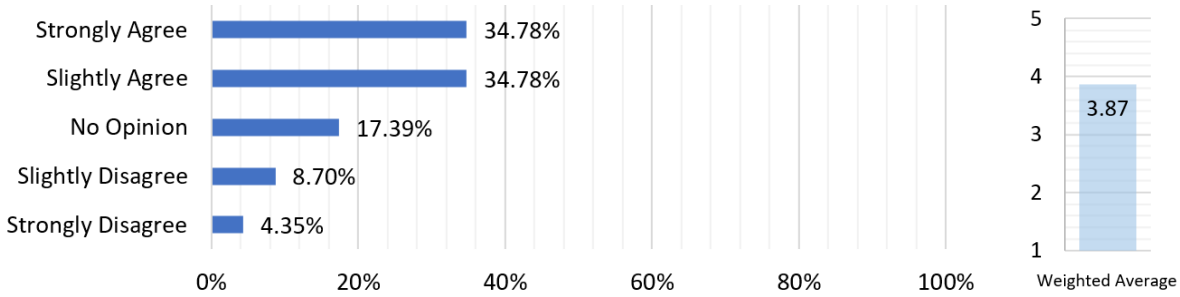




**Question 7.11**

*“I am concerned that Monterey Township is growing too fast.”*

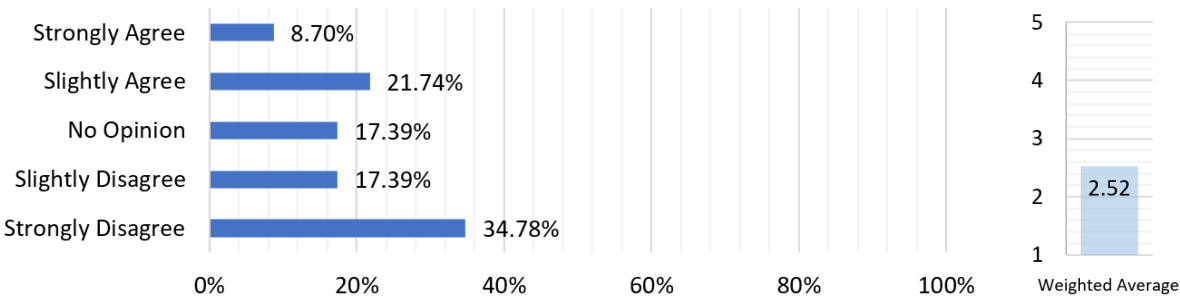
Responses: 23



**Question 7.12**

*“I am concerned that our natural environment is being threatened by development.”*

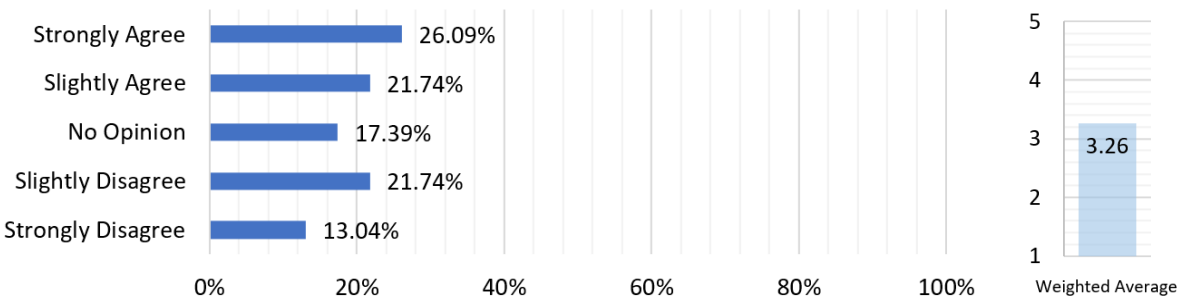
Total Responses: 23



**Question 7.13**

*“I support a millage increase to pay for dust control on Township gravel roads.”*

Total Responses: 23



**Question 7.14**

*“I think that the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) on farmland would help preserve agriculture in Monterey Township.”*

Total Responses: 23

Each of these statements received a weighted average response of four or higher and pertain entirely to preservation of farmland and the Township’s natural features, signifying a common perspective among respondents.

Likewise, the two least-agreed upon statements are Questions 7.5 (“More economic and employment opportunities are needed in the Monterey Township area.”) and 7.6 (“Monterey Township needs more housing.”) with both questions receiving a weighted average of less than two. These questions directly relate to the notion of furthering development—both residential and commercial—in Monterey Township, once again revealing a like goal among respondents to keep the Township rural. Other aspects such as housing prices (7.3), Township communication (7.9), and a millage a (7.13) are met with either mixed support

and dissent or neutrality, indicating that despite the overall unity of the respondents, specific subtopics of the broader questions such as methodology for implementing the popular agenda were less cohesive.

Finally, Question 8 prompts participants to submit any further thoughts or comments that they feel are relevant to the discussion of Monterey Township’s present state and future; The results are included below. As expected, many of the same sentiments expressed strongly in earlier parts of the survey are reiterated in this section including a call to preserve farmland and restrict residential and commercial development within the Township. Other comments refer to more specific topics that are not included in other questions such as types of development around Lakes Dumont and Wetmore, criticism and suggestions for tax structures, and general discussion of technical terms.

### Summary

Among the differing perspectives and suggestions of the survey participants, two related desires are expressed strongly a frequently: Preserving farmland and restricting residential and commercial development. These objectives together make up the larger notable aspiration which is to preserve Monterey Township and its rural features, feel, and environment the way it is.

Chapter 5 of this Master Plan contains the Township goals and objectives—segmented actionable pieces of the Township’s agenda intended to implement policy based on the conclusions drawn from this survey and other public input methods.

#### Question 8

*“General Comments (Please indicate any other comments, concerns, or suggestions relating to Monterey Township development and improvement that you may have for the Township Planning Commission. Thank you for your time!”*

Responses: 11

#### Question 8 Responses:

*“Keep housing developments or chain stores out ”*

*“Monterey has its own unique rustic charm. lets not ruin this by trying to develop the farm land into large mass produced houses”*

*“The residents of Monterey live here because it is small and a community. Adding more housing creates the risk for more crime and less of a community feel.”*

*“I really like our little community, growth isn’t always good, or needed.”*

*“Due to the large amount of taxes that we pay, we have zero benefits. Monterey offers nothing from the taxes, which increase EVERY YEAR, no decent town hall, roads that fail within 20 years, recycling center removed, roads are the last to be snow plowed. Where does all of this money go?????? This township has several hovels that people use as dwellings and it’s disgusting and embarrassing.”*

*“Keep up the good work Monterey Township!”*

*“Please preserve the quaintness of Dumont and Wetmore Lake”*

*“We are unfamiliar with what PDR means. Our primary desire is to keep Monterey Township a strong agricultural environment. Anything that deters from that would be something we would be against.”*

*“The boards which govern Monterey Township needs to make sure they are keeping as many of the residents concerns in mind when making decisions, and being careful to keep their own interests in check.”*

*“No more small lots Return to farming Encourage growth in agritourism industries Tax one acre parcels higher to discourage small lots Urban sprawl is responsible for the divisive nature of our local community”*

*“Please do not add a lot of houses or commercial development to the township. Let the cities have all the stores.”*

## *Public Input Workshop*

On September 12, 2022, Monterey Township hosted a public input workshop as an item on the Planning Commission agenda. Citizens and stakeholders were invited to review the nearly finished draft 2023 Monterey Township Master Plan and offer insight and corrections to tentative content.

The public input workshop received comments and feedback from attending seven individuals. Public notice of the event was published in the Allegan County News on August 25, 2022, followed by subsequent posting on the Monterey Township website.

Specific input devices were used to collect targeted feedback on the Plan one chapter at a time. These devices include the following:

- A walkthrough of the current content and significant changes from the previous Master Plan with ample opportunities for questions and comments.
- An activity to rank the priorities of the Master Plan goals and objectives. Results from this activity were used to number and order these goals according to their perceived significance as described in Chapter 5 (pg. 25).



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The following chapter comprises a series of planning considerations devised from and in addition to the voices of Monterey Township’s residents and stakeholders as summarized previously in Chapter 4. These topics include some of the specific concerns that face Monterey Township at the time of this Master Plan’s adoption and the Township’s position on them.

These specific subjects and insights inform many of the goals and objectives listed in Chapter 6.

## Land Use Patterns

### Housing

Like much of Allegan County, Monterey Township is seeing an increase in pressure for housing from surrounding communities, albeit mild. Despite the Township’s population fluctuations in the past decade, the overall population has remained largely stagnant.



New “barndominium”-style home.  
Source: Business Insider, 2022

However, with the increased popularity of the remote-work employment model following COVID-19 and Allegan County’s initiative to provide fiberoptic internet connections to 12,000 homes by 2025, Monterey Township is positioned to see further demand for housing.

Despite these regional changes, the residents and stakeholders of Monterey Township represented by the input participants in Chapter 4 have made clear that they wish for Monterey Township to remain rural and quiet. Current Ordinance measures enforcing this desire include restrictions in the A-1 Agricultural District on new single-family dwellings—requiring them to first receive special use permits before they can receive building permits. Other measures include A-1 parcel area regulations limiting lots to just one-to-two acres and custom land division regulations limiting division rights beyond the scope of the Michigan Land Division Act (1997).

### Utility-scale Solar Farms

Again, like much of Allegan County, the Township is receiving pressure and interest from utility companies and private solar firms alike to develop large-scale solar installations across its large tracts of open farmland.

As of October 2021, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) has officially changed their policy regarding solar farms to permit them on lands enrolled in the Farmland Development Rights Program.

This change has resulted in a sudden boom of interest from energy companies to find willing participants for solar leases before they are reached by competitors.



Assembly Solar Farm in Lapeer County, MI.  
Source: McCarthy, 2021

However, like many rural jurisdictions, Monterey Township currently lacks provisions regulating solar panels at the time of this Master Plan's adoption. The Township has made policy position to regulate large-scale solar installations in a way that will adequately protect the rural characteristics of the Township and promote an efficient use of land while still permitting area farmers to participate in leases, should the established criteria be met. This criteria will be based on example ordinances from other jurisdictions with similar goals, model Ordinance language from such planning sources as Michigan State University Extension, the Michigan Township Association, and the Michigan Association of Planners, and the preferences and judgement of local officials and residents.

### Utility-scale Wind Farms

Similarly to solar farms, many rural areas in Michigan have seen interest from energy companies to establish large-scale wind farms. While Allegan County has yet to see any utility-scale installations, they remain a growing sight in other rural areas of the state. Michigan's "thumb"—Huron and Tuscola Counties—produce an approximate 1,120 Megawattage of combined energy, with many other installations in the Bay area.<sup>1</sup> The state's second hotspot, mid-Michigan, has seen its own boom with Gratiot and Isabella Counties alone generating over approximately 1,200 Megawatts.<sup>2</sup>



Wind Michigan 1 near Ubly, MI.  
Source: U.S. Department of Energy, 2015

As such, wind farm generation has consistently increased in Michigan since 2010 at a rate of 251.7 MW per year.<sup>3</sup> Residing in a rural county with ample farmland and generally flat terrain to the north, many Allegan County Township's have adopted utility-scale wind installation regulations. Monterey Township currently lacks any relevant provisions, but has nonetheless established the position to regulate large-scale wind installations in a way that—as with solar farms—will adequately protect the rural character of the Township and promote an efficient use of land while still permitting area farmers to participate.

<sup>1,2</sup> "U.S. Wind Energy Projects – Michigan," American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), 2011.

<http://awea.org/projects/projects.aspx?s=Michigan>

<sup>3</sup> "Wind Energy in Michigan," U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

<https://windexchange.energy.gov/states/mi>

While both wind and solar farms appear to be similar issues to address, the impacts on land use and viewsheds vastly differ, requiring very different regulatory language. The Township will therefore view example ordinances from other jurisdictions with similar goals, model ordinances from professional planning sources, and the preferences and judgement of local officials and residents.

## *Environment*

### *Floodplains and Wetlands*

Monterey Township residents and stakeholders made clear in public engagement methods that protection of the natural environment should be one of their government's top priorities (Questions 7.7 and 7.8, Chapter 4). Likewise, there is little more impactful to an agriculturally based community than water amount and quality.



*Allegan Wetland Mitigation Bank, Allegan State Game Area.  
Source: Michigan Municipal Wetland Alliance (MMWA), 2020*

Monterey Township officials have thereby taken a position to protect the community's natural watersheds and wetlands through the adoption of further Zoning Ordinance provisions specific to sensitive areas. FEMA floodplains and NWI wetlands (pictured in Map 4, Chapter 3), are to be targeted for increased regulatory restrictions. Further provisions will restrict what land uses can be

developed in proximity to these areas and further site plan requirements to protect them from harmful runoff and critically altered levels of drainage.

As with other emerging planning topics, Monterey Township officials will base any floodplain and wetland protection regulations on example ordinances from other jurisdictions with similar goals, model ordinances from professional planning sources, and the preferences and judgement of local officials and residents.

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## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

In addition to providing a comprehensive analysis of Monterey Township's various physical conditions and public opinion, this Master Plan designates four overarching goals toward which Township officials can strive to achieve. These goals, numbered below in accordance with their perceived priority according to public workshop input, summarize key preferences voiced in the Monterey Township Master Plan Survey. Each goal is further divided into objectives that describe critical methods for attaining said goals.

It is the ultimate intent of this planning document to provide a foundation by which these objectives can be undertaken and these goals can be realized.

### 1. *Preservation*

Monterey Township is committed to preserving its farmland, open space, and rural character through protective zoning regulations and opportunities for alternative development. This goal is realized through the following objectives:

- a. *Preserve the rural character of the Township through **careful land use planning** and **protection of the natural environment**.*
- b. *Encourage the use of **open space and cluster development** in order to meet housing needs and at the same time **preserve as much open space as possible**. This open space can either consist of natural areas or active farming operations.*
- c. *Utilize **bonus incentives** to **promote the use of cluster and open space options** available in the Township Zoning Ordinance.*
- d. *Explore the feasibility of **larger parcel sizes** (in excess of 20 acres) in selected areas of the Township to **preserve the agricultural integrity** of active farming operations.*

### 2. *Guidance*

Monterey Township will guide nonagricultural development to the most appropriate places within and outside of the Township by providing intentional areas toward which certain development types will gravitate. This goal is realized through the following objectives:

- a. ***Permit higher density housing**, e.g., residential subdivisions in those areas of the Township that are **geographically close to utilities** and on the land that has **marginal agricultural value**.*

- b. **Allow adjacent communities**, such as cities and villages, to meet the high density housing, employment, retail, service, and medical needs of Township residents, while **maintaining rural and agricultural character**.
- c. Discourage housing developments from locating in areas which would **negatively impact existing farming operations**.
- d. Maintain the commitment to **provide affordable housing** in the Township.
- e. Create a **floodplain overlay district** to protect surface water and direct intense development to more suitable areas.

### 3. Proactivity

Monterey Township will continue to seek and apply emergent planning practices and improve communication with Monterey area residents and visitors to better apply the principals of this Master Plan. This goal is realized through the following objectives:

- a. Be **vigilant in being informed** on current land use management issues through **seminars and training**, particularly for new Planning commission and Township Board members.
- b. Consider issuing a **periodic newsletter** to **keep residents informed** on land use issues, new technologies (such as wind generating towers), adoption of zoning ordinance amendments, environmental issues, pending land use legislation, and important meetings.
- c. Devise Township regulations for **large-scale solar and wind energy installations** in the form of **Ordinance amendments**.

### 4. Reinforcement

Monterey Township will reinforce its current standards for land use and further bolster its position on protecting its natural resources through allocation of existing resources and creation of new ordinances. This goal is realized through the following objectives:

- a. Adopt a more aggressive stance in **code enforcement**, particularly in areas that have outdoor storage of junk and abandoned vehicles. This includes **allocating more financial resources** for code enforcement.
- b. **Adopt regulatory measures** for **preserving natural features** in the Township, particularly as they relate to ground and surface water. Reinforce
- c. Encourage those engaged in active agriculture to adopt **best management practices** as they relate to **manure disposal and field fertilization**.

## FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Monterey Township Future Land Use Plan consists of two parts: the narrative establishing the rationale and basis of the Plan and the Future Land Use Map. This Plan is based on three foundational principals:

1. *Consistency with the **natural features and soil conditions**;*
2. *Consistency with the **common vision** that residents have for the Township's future;*
3. *Consistency with **sound land use planning principles**, especially as they relate to **agricultural preservation**.*

The Monterey Township Future Land Use Plan is included in Map 3.4 on **page 30** of this document.

### *Future Land Use Plan Categories*

#### *Agriculture*

The Future Land Use Plan provides for continued preservation tactics within agriculture in the Township; Over 70% of Township property is planned for agriculture or open space. Agriculture as applied herein includes such a diverse range of farming activities as crop production, livestock and dairy farms, concentrated animal feeding operations, and hobby farms. The term likewise includes general open space, referring to green space and wooded acres that are reserved for future use or land that is otherwise preserved on which no development is permitted.

Those sections that have been identified as having prime agricultural soils are likewise largely or entirely planned for agricultural preservation, while some other sections not strictly dominated by prime farmland have also been designated. The Township's cumulative agricultural area amounts to over 12,000 acres.

#### *Residential*

The Future Land Use Plan has two residential categories: *Residential* provides avenues for typical suburban development while *Resort Residential* offers a higher density option, albeit with limited space in the Township.

Among the two types of single family residential developments—plats and site condominiums—the last few decades have observed a marked increase in favorability toward the latter, particularly for developments of ten or more lots. While the two neighborhood types are aesthetically identical, the site condominium's private road maintenance reduces the burden placed on the Township by plats. About 3,800 acres are planned for residential development of these types in the *Residential* category.

The *Resort Residential* category currently relates exclusively to the Sandy Pines housing development, a portion of which is in Monterey Township. This type of development is atypical for an agricultural community for its recreational

orientation and number of manufactured housing units. As such, the Township recognizes the unique opportunities it presents for Monterey area residents and visitors and provides for it as such.

Monterey Township further permits manufactured housing in any residential district outside of manufactured housing communities. This policy promotes the Township goal of providing affordable housing opportunities to Monterey area residents. The Future Land Use Plan currently makes no distinction on the preferred placement of manufactured housing developments as permitted in the Township's R-4 Mobile Home Park District, instead allowing them across the *Residential* category. However, the introduction of manufactured housing developments into agriculturally planned areas will be distinctly avoided to prevent clashes between incompatible land uses.

### *Commercial*

Monterey Township states as a development goal in Chapter 5 that it intends to allow adjacent communities to meet the commercial needs of its residents. The Plan therefore does not allocate any significant amount of land for new commercial development. However, there are two existing areas currently used for convenience commercial land use along 30<sup>th</sup> Street at 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue and in South Monterey. They provide a service to Township residents as well as motorists without detracting from the rural character of the community.

### *Recreation*

A significant number of acres are categorized as *Recreation* within the Future Land Use Map. This is land that is primarily owned by the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and is part of the Allegan State Forest extending west into Heath Township. The Forest is considered an invaluable natural resource for southwest Michigan residents for a variety of recreational activities.

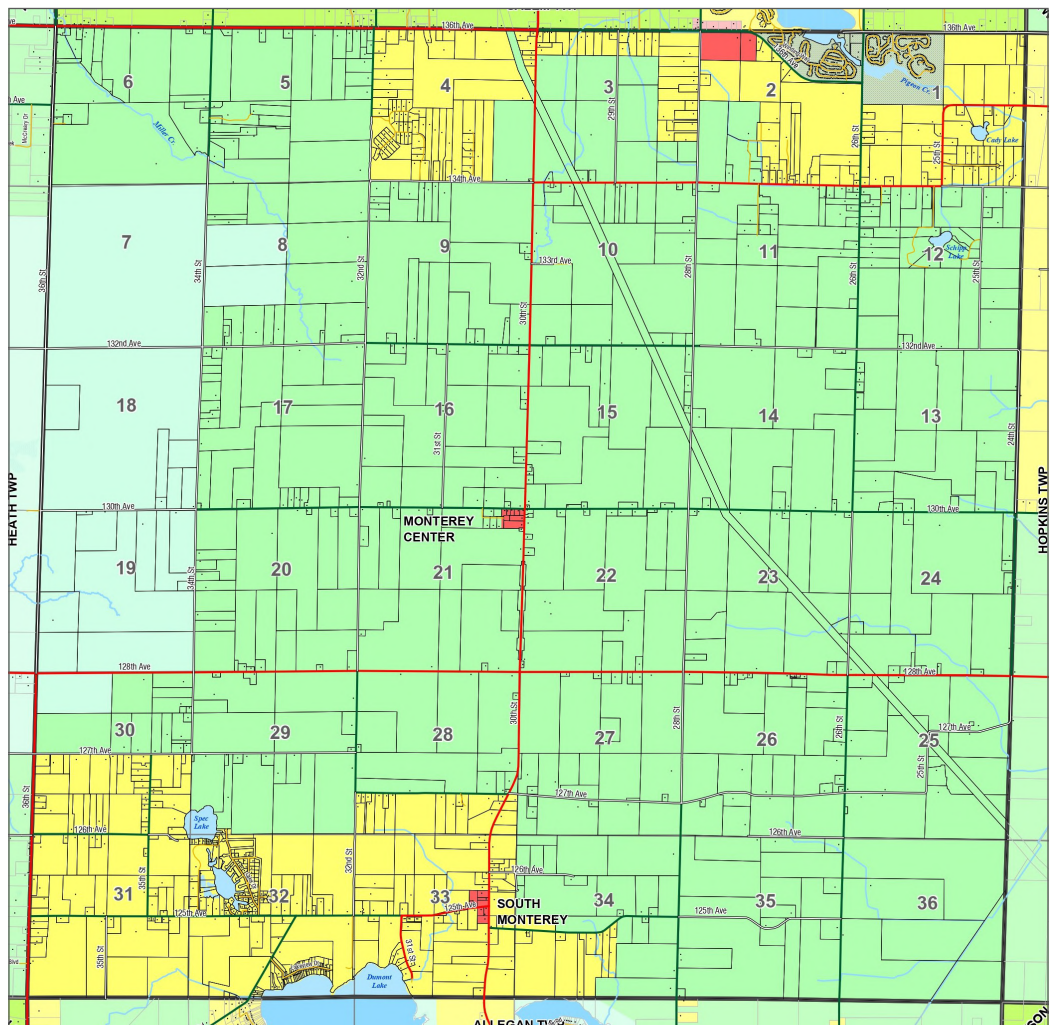
Select *Recreation* parcels in Sections 18 and 19 are still in private ownership. The policy of this Future Land Use Plan does not prevent owners of these parcels from using their properties consistent with the objectives of this Plan, namely agricultural preservation. They are currently zoned AG-1 Agricultural, a district that permits a full range of agricultural activities and permits single-family housing by special use permit. These parcels are also eligible for the Open Space Cluster provision of the Zoning Ordinance, allowing houses on smaller lots while preserving a minimum of 50% of the parcel in open space.

### *Other Land Use Issues*

Due to the Township's stated goals of preserving agriculture and the rural feel of the community, Monterey Township does not allocate any land for industrial development, including light industrial development and warehousing. While many Allegan County townships consider themselves agricultural in nature whilst including industrial property, Monterey Township lacks any utilities or infrastructure to make such a feat feasible or desirable. The Township therefore excludes industrial development from its Future Land Use Map and strictly






Regulates other nonagricultural uses like residential development so as not to negatively impact existing and future farming operations.

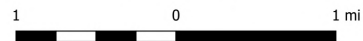
Map 3.4 below serves as the official Monterey Township Future Land Use Map and can be viewed in a larger format in Appendix B of this document.



**Map 7.4**  
**Monterey Township**  
**Future Land Use**  
**(FLU) Map**

## LEGEND

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  Agricultural |  Residential        |
|  Commercial   |  Resort Residential |
|  Recreation   |  |





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## IMPLEMENTATION

The Monterey Township Zoning Ordinance is the primary tool by which the Future Land Use Plan is to be implemented. Since the original inception of this Plan, said Ordinance has undergone several amendments to better reflect the goals and intent of the Master Plan, including:

- *Reduction of lakefront lot setbacks in the R-2 District to keep development tight and dense within those areas (Ord. 17-03)*
- *Addition of agritourism regulations to better promote and control use of the Township's agricultural resources (Ord. 18-01)*
- *Addition of home occupation regulations to better promote and control at-home businesses within the Township, reducing the need for separate commercial or industrial property (Ord. 18-02)*
- *Rewriting of the Zoning Board of Appeal's jurisdictional authority to strengthen the Township's planning processes (Ord. 18-05)*
- *Introduction of a completely rewritten AG-1 Agricultural District section (Ord. 18-07)*
- *Introduction of a completely rewritten R-1 Rural Estate District section (Ord. 18-08)*

Other implementation tactics include those that have only become popular in recent years such as conditional rezoning and the purchase of development rights (PDR). The latter allows a governmental entity to buy the development rights of parcels of land. This is generally exercised as the State of Michigan buying development rights of farms, acting as a method of farmland preservation facilitated at the State level, similar to PA 116 and 260.

The Township can also adopt or amend existing issue-specific ordinances to address Township goals such as blight and environmental preservation. Township Goals 8 and 9 explicitly provide for the creation of these regulations as inherent desires of the community.

The Township can simultaneously engage in increased communication with Monterey area residents via regular newsletters, online engagement, and further surveys to gauge the effectiveness of the Township's ability to implement and maintain the goals and objectives of this plan.

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# APPENDIX A

## SURVEY RESULTS, TABULATED

| Response           | Count |
|--------------------|-------|
| Less than one year | 1     |
| 1 to 5 years       | 2     |
| 6 to 10 years      | 2     |
| 11 to 20 years     | 3     |
| 21 to 30 years     | 1     |
| 31 to 40 years     | 4     |
| 41 to 50 years     | 3     |
| More than 50 years | 7     |

| Response           | Count |
|--------------------|-------|
| Fewer than 2 acres | 3     |
| 2 to 4.99 acres    | 3     |
| 5 to 9.99 acres    | 3     |
| 10 to 14.99 acres  | 0     |
| 15 to 19.99 acres  | 1     |
| 20 to 29.99 acres  | 2     |
| 30 to 39.99 acres  | 0     |
| 40 or more acres   | 11    |

| Response   | Count |
|--|-------|
| One story, single-family dwelling                                | 8     |
| One story with finished walkout basement, single-family dwelling | 5     |
| Two-story, single-family dwelling                                | 9     |
| Two-story with finished walkout basement, single-family dwelling | 0     |
| Single-wide mobile home  | 0     |
| Double-wide mobile home  | 0     |
| Other (please specify)   | 1     |

| Response  | Count |
|---|-------|
| Part of an active farm*                               | 16    |
| Part of a residential subdivision                     | 1     |
| Not part of an active farm or residential subdivision | 5     |
| Other (please specify)                                | 1     |

### Question 1.

*“How many years have you and/or your family resided in Monterey Township?”*

Total Responses: 23

### Question 2.

*“How many acres in area is the lot on which you and/or your family live?”*

Total Responses: 23

### Question 3.

*“How would you best describe the type of dwelling in which you and/or your family live?”*

Responses: 23

#### Other Responses:

*“Half farmhouse half log cabin. Two story. Single family”*

### Question 4.

*“How would you best categorize the lot on which you and/or your family live?”*

Responses: 23

#### Other Responses:

*“Rural estate”*

| Response                                      | Count |
|---|-------|
| Active Farming                                | 19    |
| Amount/Quality of Natural Features/Open Space | 18    |
| Rural Character                               | 17    |
| Large Lots                                    | 9     |
| Sense of Community                            | 8     |
| Schools                                       | 7     |
| Road Conditions                               | 6     |
| Traffic Volume                                | 4     |
| Township Government                           | 4     |
| Crime Rate                                    | 3     |
| Other (please specify)                        | 2     |
| Proximity to Amenities                        | 1     |
| Proximity to Employment                       | 0     |
| Housing Prices                                | 0     |

| Response                                      | Count |
|---|-------|
| Other (please specify)                        | 8     |
| Traffic Volume                                | 6     |
| Road Conditions                               | 6     |
| Proximity to Employment                       | 5     |
| Proximity to Amenities                        | 5     |
| Housing Prices                                | 5     |
| Township Government                           | 3     |
| Crime Rate                                    | 3     |
| Schools                                       | 2     |
| Orderliness of Growth                         | 2     |
| Sense of Community                            | 1     |
| Amount/Quality of Natural Features/Open Space | 1     |
| Rural Character                               | 0     |
| Large Lots                                    | 0     |
| Active Farming                                | 0     |

| Response          | Count |
|-------------------|-------|
| Strongly Agree    | 19    |
| Slightly Agree    | 2     |
| No Opinion        | 1     |
| Slightly Disagree | 0     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1     |

### Question 5.

*“What aspects of living in Monterey Township do you find the most desirable (please select up to five answers)?”*

Total Responses: 23

### Question 6.

*“What aspects of living in Monterey Township do you find the least desirable (please select up to five answers)?”*

Total Responses: 22

#### Other Responses:

*“The large rate of new houses being built in the area, trying to make our home like the next new big city”*

*“None”*

*“It’s perfect the way it is. It scares me deeply to see big developments and subdivisions come in. People live in Monterey because they like this style of life. This isn’t Byron center. We should keep it that way.”*

*“Snowmobile trails”*

### Question 7.1

*“Monterey Township should preserve its rural character.”*

Responses: 23

**Question 7.2**

*“Certain parts of Monterey Township should be designed for growth and other parts should be kept as they are now.”*

Responses: 23

| Response          | Count |
|-------------------|-------|
| Strongly Agree    | 19    |
| Slightly Agree    | 2     |
| No Opinion        | 1     |
| Slightly Disagree | 0     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1     |

**Question 7.3**

*“Housing in Monterey Township is affordable.”*

Responses: 22

| Response          | Count |
|-------------------|-------|
| Strongly Agree    | 19    |
| Slightly Agree    | 2     |
| No Opinion        | 1     |
| Slightly Disagree | 0     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1     |

**Question 7.4**

*“Neighborhood shopping facilities (such as grocery stores, drug stores, dry cleaners, etc.) should be concentrated in the nearby Cities and Villages.”*

Responses: 23

| Response          | Count |
|-------------------|-------|
| Strongly Agree    | 19    |
| Slightly Agree    | 2     |
| No Opinion        | 1     |
| Slightly Disagree | 0     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1     |

**Question 7.5**

*“More economic and employment opportunities are needed in the Monterey Township area.”*

Responses: 23

| Response          | Count |
|-------------------|-------|
| Strongly Agree    | 19    |
| Slightly Agree    | 2     |
| No Opinion        | 1     |
| Slightly Disagree | 0     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1     |

**Question 7.6**

*“Monterey Township needs more housing.”*

Responses: 23

| Response          | Count |
|-------------------|-------|
| Strongly Agree    | 19    |
| Slightly Agree    | 2     |
| No Opinion        | 1     |
| Slightly Disagree | 0     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1     |

**Question 7.7**

*“Preservation of the natural environment (e.g. wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitat, groundwater, etc.) should be a top priority.”*

Responses: 23

| Response          | Count |
|-------------------|-------|
| Strongly Agree    | 19    |
| Slightly Agree    | 2     |
| No Opinion        | 1     |
| Slightly Disagree | 0     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1     |

**Question 7.8**

*“Protection of the Rabbit River corridor is important.”*

Responses: 23

| Response          | Count |
|-------------------|-------|
| Strongly Agree    | 19    |
| Slightly Agree    | 2     |
| No Opinion        | 1     |
| Slightly Disagree | 0     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1     |

**Question 7.9**

*“There needs to be more communication between Monterey Township and its residents such as a newsletter.”*

Responses: 23

| Response          | Count |
|-------------------|-------|
| Strongly Agree    | 19    |
| Slightly Agree    | 2     |
| No Opinion        | 1     |
| Slightly Disagree | 0     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1     |

**Question 7.10**

*“Monterey Township should enact regulations that preserve its natural features.”*

Responses: 23

| Response          | Count |
|-------------------|-------|
| Strongly Agree    | 19    |
| Slightly Agree    | 2     |
| No Opinion        | 1     |
| Slightly Disagree | 0     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1     |

**Question 7.11**

*“I am concerned that Monterey Township is growing too fast.”*

Responses: 23

| Response          | Count |
|-------------------|-------|
| Strongly Agree    | 19    |
| Slightly Agree    | 2     |
| No Opinion        | 1     |
| Slightly Disagree | 0     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1     |

**Question 7.12**

*“I am concerned that our natural environment is being threatened by development.”*

Responses: 23

| Response          | Count |
|-------------------|-------|
| Strongly Agree    | 19    |
| Slightly Agree    | 2     |
| No Opinion        | 1     |
| Slightly Disagree | 0     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1     |

**Question 7.13**

*“I support a millage increase to pay for dust control on Township gravel roads.”*

Responses: 23

| Response          | Count |
|-------------------|-------|
| Strongly Agree    | 19    |
| Slightly Agree    | 2     |
| No Opinion        | 1     |
| Slightly Disagree | 0     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1     |



| Response          | Count |
|-------------------|-------|
| Strongly Agree    | 19    |
| Slightly Agree    | 2     |
| No Opinion        | 1     |
| Slightly Disagree | 0     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1     |

**Responses:**

*"Keep housing developments or chain stores out "*

*"Monterey has its own unique rustic charm. lets not ruin this by trying to develop the farm land into large mass produced houses"*

*"The residents of Monterey live here because it is small and a community. Adding more housing creates the risk for more crime and less of a community feel."*

*"I really like our little community, growth isn't always good, or needed."*

*"Due to the large amount of taxes that we pay, we have zero benefits. Monterey offers nothing from the taxes, which increase EVERY YEAR, no decent town hall, roads that fail within 20 years, recycling center removed, roads are the last to be snow plowed. Where does all of this money go??????? This township has several hovels that people use as dwellings and it's disgusting and embarrassing."*

*"Keep up the good work Monterey Township!"*

*"Please preserve the quaintness of Dumont and Wetmore Lake"*

*"We are unfamiliar with what PDR means. Our primary desire is to keep Monterey Township a strong agricultural environment. Anything that deters from that would be something we would be against."*

*"The boards which govern Monterey Township needs to make sure they are keeping as many of the residents concerns in mind when making decisions, and being careful to keep their own interests in check."*

*"No more small lots Return to farming Encourage growth in agritourism industries Tax one acre parcels higher to discourage small lots Urban sprawl is responsible for the divisive nature of our local community"*

*"Please do not add a lot of houses or commercial development to the township. Let the cities have all the stores."*

**Question 7.14**

*"I think that the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) on farmland would help preserve agriculture in Monterey Township."*

Responses: 23

**Question 8**

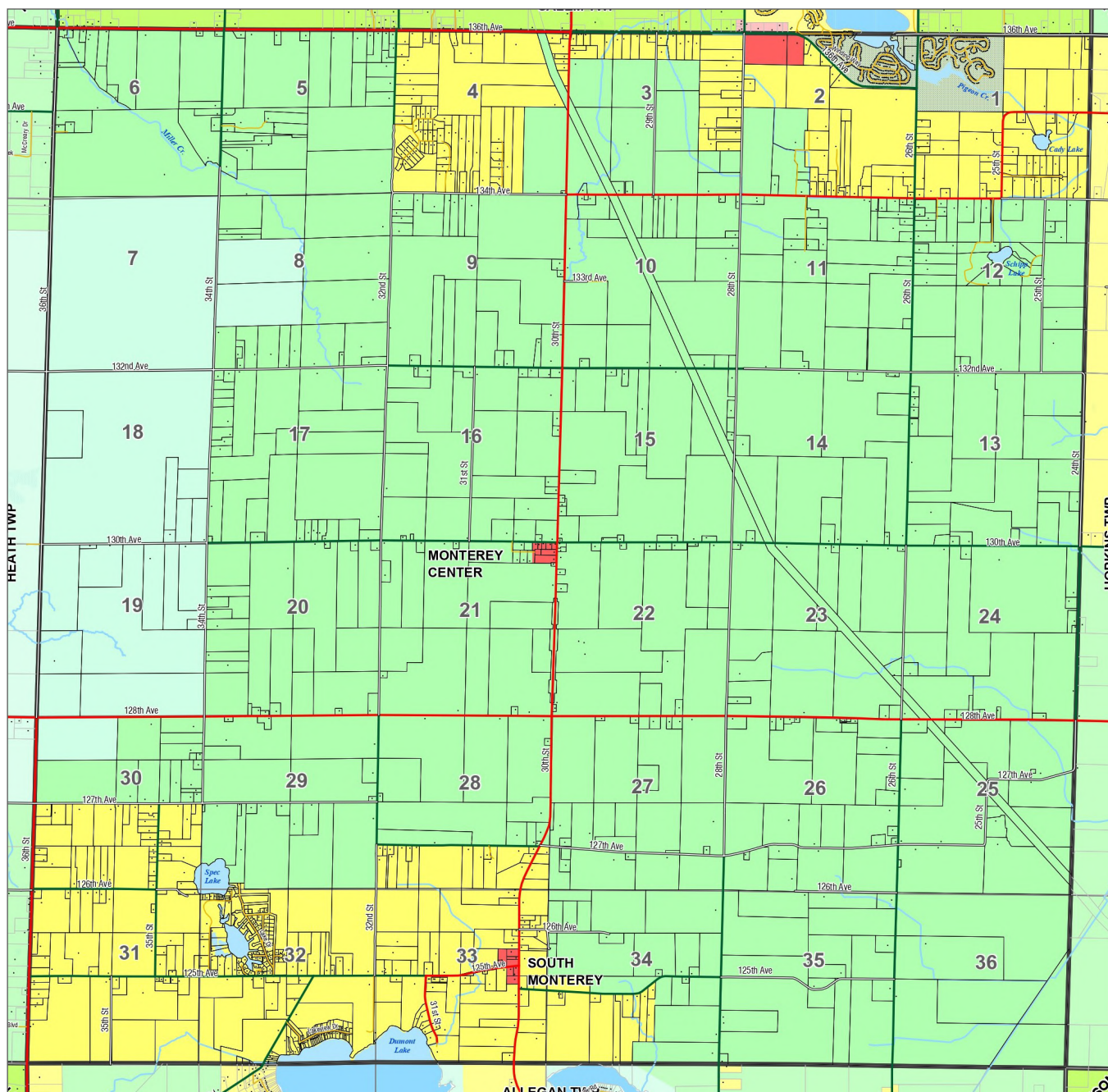
*"General Comments (Please indicate any other comments, concerns, or suggestions relating to Monterey Township development and improvement that you may have for the Township Planning Commission. Thank you for your time!"*

Responses: 11

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# APPENDIX B

## FUTURE LAND USE MAP, ENLARGED



Map 3.4 (Enlarged). Monterey Township Future Land Use (FLU) Map



### LEGEND

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Recreation
- Residential
- Resort Residential

