

**Survey of Residents of the Charter Township of Union:  
Report of Findings, 2023**



**Prepared by:**

**Mary S. Senter, Professor of Sociology**

**with Assistance from**

**Haley Klama, Sociology Major with a Concentration in Youth Studies**

**Amanda Whitaker, Sociology Major  
with a Concentration in Social and Criminal Justice**

**Central Michigan University**

**February 15, 2024**

**Table of Contents**

Background ..... 1

The Questionnaires and the Samples ..... 1

Administration of Surveys..... 2

Demographics of the Print Sample ..... 4

Quality of Resources and Services Provided by the Township ..... 8

Priorities and Special Projects..... 12

Development and Land Use ..... 14

Amount of Information about Issues and Ways of Receiving Information ..... 16

Quality of Life..... 18

Park Land Use by Households..... 20

Satisfaction with Township Parks ..... 27

Preferences for New or Enhanced Park Options ..... 28

Additional Suggestions and Comments: Print Sample..... 33

Demographics of the Online Sample ..... 41

Online Sample: Quality of Resources and Services Provided by the Township..... 46

Online Sample: Priorities and Special Projects ..... 49

Online Sample: Development and Land Use..... 51

Amount of Information about Issues and Ways of Receiving Information ..... 52

Online Sample: Quality of Life..... 54

Online Sample: Park Land Use and Preference..... 54

Online Sample: Satisfaction with Township Parks..... 59

Preferences for New or Enhance Park Options ..... 60

Additional Suggestions and Comments ..... 64

Subgroup Analyses for Print Sample..... 66

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS..... 72

Appendix A: Survey Instrument ..... 75

## **Background**

In Summer 2023, the Charter Township of Union contracted with Central Michigan University (CMU) to complete a survey of Township residents. The purpose of the study was to explore residents' views about Township services and their preferences for the future. Findings would be useful to the Township's officials and staff in their efforts to meet residents' needs and to revise the Township's Master Plan. A similar project was undertaken in 2009 and 2016.

### **The Questionnaires and the Samples**

A survey instrument was developed for this project by CMU staff in consultation with the Union Township Board of Trustees, the Planning Commission, and Township staff. Many of the questions are replications of ones used in the earlier surveys, although there is a greater emphasis in the 2023 instrument on parks and recreation needs. The survey was designed to be administered multi-modally—that is, the survey exists in both a six-page print format sent through U.S. mail and an online format created using the online survey software Qualtrics. Appendix A contains the print version of the survey.

Two distinct samples were used in this survey project. First, Union Township provided a list of property owners in the Township. This list of names and addresses was produced from the file used for taxation purposes. Excluded from the file for the survey sample were addresses outside of Michigan and the addresses of business firms, because it was highly unlikely that these addresses were associated with individuals actually living in the Township. An additional list of addresses was created from a file containing those properties that have been approved for rentals through the rental inspection process. Hence, this second list, while lacking names of residents, allowed for a mailing to residents of single family homes that are currently being rented. For ease of nomenclature, this sample will be called the “print sample.”

Second, the Every Door Delivery Method (EDDM) system available through the U.S. post office was used to provide a flier to the mailboxes in five postal routes with high overlap with the boundaries of Union Township. The flier provided information on the survey project along with instructions on how to access the online survey using either a QR code or the URL link.

### **Administration of Surveys**

The Total Design Method was used for administering the survey to the print sample. On October 30, 2023, a cover letter, the six-page questionnaire booklet, and a postage-paid return envelope was mailed to 2,006 property owners or to “occupant” at the addresses of the single family rental units. Approximately one week later a post card was mailed to all of these addresses. The postcard thanked those respondents who had already taken the time to return a completed survey. It also served as a reminder to those who had not. Then, two weeks after the postcard mailing or approximately three weeks after the initial survey mailing on November 20, a second cover letter and second questionnaire booklet were mailed to all residents from whom we had not yet received a completed questionnaire (excluding those whose address was not valid according to the post office).

No attempt was made to contact a random adult within the household to complete the questionnaire. The assumption was that any adult household member—18 years and over—could adequately report on the behavior and opinion of household members.

The period for accepting surveys from residents closed on Tuesday, January 2, 2024, having given residents more than one month after receiving the second mailing to return completed questionnaires. In the end, completed print surveys were returned from 638 respondents. Fifty two survey packets were returned to CMU because of bad addresses or vacant properties. This yields a very fine response rate for the residents sample of 32.7 percent [2,006 addresses - 52 bad

addresses = final sample of 1,954 good addresses, and  $(638 \text{ completed questionnaires}/1,954) * 100 = 32.7$  percent]. CMU gratefully acknowledges the cooperation and assistance of all of the residents who spent time completing questionnaires.

Readers should remember that all random samples have associated with them a margin of error. Such an error is always present when it is not possible to conduct a census, observing every person or household in the population. Given the households of Union Township to which print surveys were sent, a sample of 638 yields a margin of error of 3.9 percentage points, at the 95 percent confidence level. That is, a reader can be 95 percent confident that the households of Union Township fall within plus or minus 3.9 percentage points of the sample statistics presented in this report from the print sample of residents. If one applies the Finite Population Correction factor, which is appropriate here because the sample is more than five percent of the population, the margin of error falls to slightly less, 3.2 percent (plus or minus 3.2 percent). The statistical analysis used in some portions of this report will be based on the more traditional calculation of the margin of error, which assumes a large population size.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, small differences between subgroups in the sample or between the results from one question and another should be discounted.

Approximately, 5,700 fliers encouraging participation in the online survey were delivered to the U.S. post office by CMU on Thursday, November 9 and Friday, November 10. The post office staff assured CMU that the fliers would be delivered to the designated five routes within two to three days. By December 15, 2023, when data were downloaded, only 89 respondents completed

---

<sup>1</sup> This assumes that our sample of residents is drawn from a large population of residents in households (that would share similar characteristics across years). In point of fact, we contacted a high percentage of all households in Union Township currently, which is why we also report the Finite Population Correction factor (FPC = square root  $[(1,954 - 638) / (1,954 - 1)] = .82$ ) here.

the online survey. The response rate to this survey is so low that no scientifically sound conclusions can be based on the EDDM sample.

### **Demographics of the Print Sample**

The survey included questions about various aspects of the respondent’s household and about their background. Respondents were reminded of the pledge to maintain confidentiality and that the collected data would be utilized solely for summary purposes, as exemplified in this report. Table 1a presents data on the years that respondents have lived in Isabella County and in Union Township. Table 1b provides information on the number of people in the household and the ages of household members, and Table 1c includes information on the demographic characteristics of respondents.

**Print Table 1a: Years Lived in Isabella County and Union Township:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>0-5 years</b>	<b>6-10 years</b>	<b>11-15 years</b>	<b>16-20 years</b>	<b>21-30 years</b>	<b>31 or more years</b>
How many years have you lived in Isabella County, including your years in Union Township?	11.5	7.2	5.9	6.3	16.0	53.1
How many years have you lived in Union Township altogether?	20.0	12.6	7.1	10.1	19.4	30.8

**Print Table 1b: Household Age Demographics:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Number of People in Household</b>	
One	21.1
Two	47.2
Three or four	24.3
Five or more	7.5
<b>Percent One or More Person in Household by Age Group</b>	
17 years of age and under	23.3
18-34 years old	17.6
35-54 years old	31.7
55-74 years old	53.6
75 or more years old	23.5

**Print Table 1c: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Residence Location</b>	
High density apartment or condo complex	6.3
Subdivision / neighborhood	58.2
Rural / agricultural	32.5
Other	2.9
<b>Age</b>	
18-25 years old	1.1
26-35 years old	4.4
36-45 years old	14.0
46-55 years old	14.9
56-65 years old	21.7
66-75 years old	25.4
76+ years old	18.5

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
African American	1.5
Asian	1.5
Hispanic	1.0
Native American / American Indian	2.2
White	96.1
Other	1.7
	Percent
<b>Yearly Household Income</b>	
Less than \$25,000	5.1
\$25,000 up to \$50,000	17.1
\$50,000 up to \$75,000	19.1
\$75,000 up to \$100,000	20.2
\$100,000 up to \$150,000	19.9
More than \$150,000	18.6

Respondents from the print sample are long-term residents of Isabella County and Union Township. Almost 70 percent have lived in the county for more than 20 years and almost one half have been residents of Union Township for this period of time. By way of contrast, 20 percent of print sample respondents have lived in the Township for five or fewer years, and about 12 percent have lived in the county for this relatively short period of time. More than one half of the print sample reports living in a subdivision/neighborhood, with about one third defining the area where they live in the Township as rural/agricultural.

About one respondent in five lives alone, with almost half reporting living in a two-person household and almost one third living in a household with three or more people.

Almost one quarter of households include children (0 to 17 years of age), and a comparable number include seniors 75 years of age and older.

The median age of respondents from the print sample is 64 years, with only five percent 35 years or younger or more than 40 percent over 65. More than 95 percent of the print sample identifies as “white.” The median income of households from the print sample is in the category \$75,000 up to \$100,000, with only five percent reporting household income less than \$25,000 and almost 40 percent with household incomes of \$100,000 or more.

### **Quality of Resources and Services Provided by the Township**

The survey began by asking participants to evaluate the quality of various services provided by Union Township. Respondents were instructed to liken their ratings to the school grading system, where A denotes excellent, B is good, C is adequate, D is fair, and E is poor. A “don’t know/don’t use” option was also available. Table 2 displays the percentage distributions for the print sample. This table provides two panels of results—the first panel (2a) includes all respondents, while the second (2b) includes only respondents with an opinion on the issue, excluding those who responded with “Don't know” or “Do not use.” Table 2b also includes an additional column “N” which represents the total number of respondents who answered with an opinion regarding the topic in question. Table 2 and all tables that follow are arranged with the “positive” findings in descending order, so that the service with the highest percentage of “A” ratings, for example, is first in the two panels.

**Print Table 2a: Ratings of Union Township Services:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>A Excellent</b>	<b>B Good</b>	<b>C Adequate</b>	<b>D Fair</b>	<b>E Poor</b>	<b>Don't know/ Do not use</b>
Customer service from Township Hall staff	32.1	26.5	13.7	5.4	4.0	18.3
Curbside recycling	28.5	27.7	12.0	5.4	3.5	22.9
Police services provided to the Township by the Isabella County Sheriff's department	26.3	27.8	9.6	2.6	1.3	32.5
Fire services provided to the Township by the City of Mount Pleasant	25.7	15.7	4.0	1.4	0.3	52.9
Union Township's water and sewer services	17.6	25.0	13.8	8.2	7.1	28.4
Customer service from parks and recreation staff	16.2	15.7	7.5	1.3	1.1	58.2
Customer service from water and sewer utilities staff	15.4	17.3	10.7	3.5	5.8	47.3
Overall government services provided by Union Township	13.2	34.7	24.6	6.8	4.5	16.2
The zoning and building permit application process	6.1	11.7	12.8	3.8	9.0	56.6
Responsiveness of Board of Trustees members to your concerns	3.7	8.0	11.4	5.6	5.9	65.3
The rental inspection process	2.6	4.8	5.2	2.3	3.1	82.1

There are two key conclusions from Table 2a. First, the percentage of positive responses (“excellent” or “good”) exceeds the percentage of negative responses (“fair” or “poor”) in each case, although at times not by much. In fact, over 50 percent of the print sample gives ratings of excellent or good to customer services from Township Hall staff, curbside recycling, and police services provided to the Township by the Isabella County Sheriff’s department.

Second, the percentage of respondents with “no opinion” varies a good deal from 18 percent to 82 percent. For five questions, more than one half of the sample reports that they have no opinion when it comes to the rental inspection process, the responsiveness of Board of Trustees members to your concerns, zoning and building permit application process, customer services from parks and recreation staff, the, and fire services provided to the Township by the City of Mount Pleasant.

**Print Table 2b: Ratings of Union Township Services:  
Percentage Distributions for Respondents with an Opinion**

	<b>A Excellent</b>	<b>B Good</b>	<b>C Adequate</b>	<b>D Fair</b>	<b>E Poor</b>	<b>N</b>
Fire services provided to the Township by the City of Mount Pleasant	54.6	66.2	8.5	3.1	0.7	295
Customer service from Township Hall staff	39.3	32.4	16.8	6.6	4.9	512
Police services provided to the Township by the Isabella County Sheriff's department	39.0	41.1	14.2	3.8	1.9	423
Customer service from parks and recreation staff	38.7	37.5	18.0	3.1	2.7	261
Curbside recycling	36.9	35.9	15.6	7.1	4.6	482
Customer service from water and sewer utilities staff	29.2	32.8	20.4	6.7	10.9	329
Union Township's water and sewer services	24.6	34.9	19.2	11.4	9.8	447
Overall government services provided by Union Township	15.7	41.5	29.4	8.1	5.4	521
The rental inspection process	14.4	27.0	28.8	12.6	17.1	111
The zoning and building permit application process	14.0	26.9	29.5	8.9	20.7	271
Responsiveness of Board of Trustees members to your concerns	10.6	23.1	32.9	16.2	17.1	216

Table 2b highlights those services that receive relatively high and relatively low ratings.

Fewer than 12 percent of print respondents give the low ratings of D or E to fire services

provided to the Township by the City of Mount Pleasant, customer service from Township Hall staff, police services provided to the Township by the Isabella County Sheriff's department, customer service from parks and recreation staff, and curbside recycling. While positive responses exceed negative ones, fewer than 20 percent of print respondents with opinions give the most positive rating of A to overall government services, the rental inspection process, and the zoning and building permit application process. The print sample with opinions is split in views about the responsiveness of Board of Trustees members to "your concerns," with 34 percent giving A or B grades and 33 percent providing D or E ones.

### **Priorities and Special Projects**

A number of questions in the interview schedule focused on the priorities of people living in the Township. The questionnaire noted that: "Union Township relies on taxes to pay for a variety of services. Because resources are limited, the Township wants to know about the priorities of residents. Please indicate whether you think each initiative should be a high, medium, or low priority for use of tax dollars." Table 3 provides percentage distributions summarizing the residents' views.

**Print Table 3: Priorities for Use of Tax Dollars:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>High Priority</b>	<b>Medium Priority</b>	<b>Low Priority</b>
Improving roads in the Township	61.9	34.0	4.2
Reducing property blight (messiness) in the Township	39.6	42.0	18.4
Enhanced public safety services in the Township	35.3	48.0	16.7
Improved street lighting	33.7	43.0	23.3
More sidewalks and pathways in the Township	28.0	36.4	35.6
Snowplowing of sidewalks	23.8	41.4	34.9
Township ordinance enforcement	19.2	48.0	32.8
Recycling for apartments	14.8	38.3	46.9
Electric vehicle charging stations	7.2	22.4	70.4

Respondents' priorities differ considerably, with fully 62 percent indicating that improving roads in the Township is a high priority, and only seven percent giving such emphasis to electric vehicle charging stations. In fact, road improvement stands out as a high priority because it is the only initiative of the nine that receives a high priority endorsement by more than one half of the print sample and a low priority rating of less than five percent. The only ideas viewed as high priority by at least 35 percent of respondents (and low priority by less than 20 percent) are reducing property blight in the Township and enhanced public safety services.

Views are more mixed when it comes to improved street lighting, more sidewalks and pathways in the Township, the snowplowing of sidewalks, and Township ordinance enforcement

for at least about 20 percent give these suggestions high priority rates and at least 20 percent provide low priority ratings.

Two priorities are considered high priority by fewer than 15 percent of the sample—recycling for apartment and electric vehicle charging stations. At least 45 percent view these items as low priority.

The Township received \$1.4 million from the federal government as part of pandemic relief funds. Residents were asked how they believe this one-time allocation to the Township should be spent. They were given a choice of three options—general Township services, Township infrastructure, or recreation. Table 4 provides the percentages summarizing responses to this question.

**Print Table 4: Priority for Spending Pandemic Relief Funds:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Percent</b>
Township infrastructure	46.7
Recreation	27.0
General Township services	26.2

Almost one half of respondents want pandemic relief funds spent on Township’s infrastructure, although about 25 percent give highest priority to recreation and a comparable number give highest priority to general Township services.

### **Development and Land Use**

Respondents were also asked about their views about “development and land use in Union Township.” They were directed to indicate their opinion by checking one of the following

responses: “definitely support,” “probably support,” “probably oppose,” or “definitely oppose.”

A “don’t know” option was also provided. Table 5 provides the percentage distributions summarizing responses to this question set.

**Print Table 5: Support for Development and Land Use Proposals:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Definitely Support</b>	<b>Probably Support</b>	<b>Probably Oppose</b>	<b>Definitely Oppose</b>	<b>Don’t know</b>
Protecting the residential quality of existing neighborhoods	64.9	29.7	1.9	0.6	2.8
Protecting existing farmland in the Township	53.7	33.0	2.7	1.4	9.2
Developing more single-family housing in the Township	22.4	56.2	10.4	3.8	7.2
Growth in industrial development in the Township	16.9	48.4	18.2	8.6	8.0
Acquiring land to expand opportunities for advanced manufacturing and clean technology businesses	15.4	38.8	18.9	15.3	11.6
Use of farmland for large-scale solar energy production	11.5	29.8	19.7	29.4	9.6
Developing more multi-family housing in the Township	5.9	25.2	34.0	25.7	9.3

Only two ways of using land are definitely supported by more than one half of the print sample: protecting the residential quality of existing neighborhoods and protecting existing farmland in the Township. Fewer than five percent of the sample is either probably or definitely opposed to either of these ideas.

There is more support than opposition to developing more single family housing in the Township (ratio of 5.5 support to 1 opposition), growth in industrial development in the Township (ratio of 2.4 to 1), and acquiring land to expand opportunities for advanced manufacturing and clean technology businesses (ratio of 1.6 to 1).

About one half or more of the sample is probably or definitely opposed to the use of farmland for large-scale solar energy production and to developing more multi-family housing in the Township.

### **Amount of Information about Issues and Ways of Receiving Information**

One section of the questionnaire focused on knowledge about Township issues and preferred ways of receiving information. The section began by asking respondents how much knowledge they have in two areas. It was acknowledged at the outset that Township “residents differ in terms of how much information they have about the Township.” Three response options were provided—“good deal of knowledge,” “some knowledge,” and “little or no knowledge.” Table 6 uses percentages to summarize responses. Table 6 uses percentages to summarize responses.

**Print Table 6: Amount of Information about the Township:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Good Deal of Knowledge</b>	<b>Some Knowledge</b>	<b>Little to No Knowledge</b>
Accessing services in the Township (who to call; where to find information)	22.8	57.0	20.2
The Township Master Plan for land use	6.5	21.0	72.5

Relatively few respondents express a good deal of knowledge in either area. In fact, comparable percentages of the sample report a good deal of knowledge about accessing services in the Township and little to no knowledge. The vast majority of respondents—almost three quarters—report having little to no knowledge about the Township Master Plan for land use.

Near the end of the survey respondents were asked their preferred method of receiving information about parks and recreation facilities and services. They could check as many options as apply, so that percentages displayed in Table 7 will exceed 100 percent.

**Print Table 7: Preferred Method of Receiving Township Information About Parks and Recreation Facilities and Services: Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Percent</b>
Township print newsletter	46.4
Township’s website	43.2
Township email newsletter	39.3
Social media	34.4
The Morning Sun Newspaper	18.5
Information displayed at parks	12.8
Radio	10.6
Public access television	5.9
Attending meetings (in person or virtual)	4.2
Other	3.6 <sup>2</sup>

Four methods are endorsed by at least one third of respondents: a print or email Township newsletter, the Township website, or social media. No other method is selected by even one in five respondents.

### **Quality of Life**

Respondents were also asked two questions designed to gauge their general views about change and the quality of life in the Township. Table 8 provides a summary of the responses from the print sample, using percentages.

---

<sup>2</sup> Seven of the 17 responses coded as “other” mentioned “mail” or the U.S. postal service.

**Print Table 8: Quality of Life Living in Union Township:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>
How would you describe your quality of life living in Union Township today?	25.0	60.5	11.5	1.6	1.4
How would you rate the changes that have taken place in the quality of life in Union Township over the past 10 years?	6.0	37.7	26.4	8.4	21.5

Respondents provide high ratings for the quality of life in the Township today, with 25 percent reporting that it is excellent and 60 percent indicating good. Only 13 percent provide a fair or poor rating. About one in five respondents indicates no opinion about the changes that have taken place in the quality of life in the Township over the past 10 years. Those respondents with opinions are more mixed in their evaluations with 44 percent reporting excellent or good changes and 35 percent indicating fair or poor.

## **Park Land Use by Households**

A large portion of the 2023 survey was devoted to issues related to parks and recreation. This section of the questionnaire began by asking respondents about whether they believed that there were sufficient parks and green space areas near their residence. They were then asked about their frequency of visiting township parks—McDonald Park and Jameson Park. Table 9a provides a summary of responses to these two questions. Regardless of their answers to these questions, respondents were asked a question about the reasons that they do not use these parks more. They were asked to choose as many response options as apply; consequently, the percentages in the total will not aggregate to 100 percent. These responses are summarized with percentages in Table 9b.

**Print Table 9a: Sufficient Parks and Green Space Areas Near Residence and Frequency of Use: Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Sufficient Parks and Green Space Areas Near Residence</b>	
Yes	72.1
No	16.5
Not Sure	11.4
<b>Frequency of Visiting Township Parks during the Past 12 Months</b>	
At least once a week	4.8
A few times per month	9.2
About once per month	6.8
A few times during the year	45.3
Never <sup>3</sup>	33.9

Almost three quarters of respondents believe that there are sufficient parks and green space areas near their residence. Meanwhile, relatively few respondents visit Township parks frequently. That is, fewer than 15 percent indicate that they visit Township parks at least one a month, 45 percent visit only a few times during the year, and 34 percent never visit these parks.

---

<sup>3</sup> If a respondent answered “Never” for Table 9a, questions from Table 10 and 12 were not displayed for the respondent to answer.

**Print Table 9b: Reasons Household Members Have Not Visited Township Parks:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Percent</b>
We are too busy or not interested	43.8
My disability or age	19.0
Don't have features or amenities I want	14.8
Don't have equipment or facilities I need	8.8
Inconvenient locations	8.6
I don't know where the parks are located	6.2 <sup>4</sup>
Lack of recreation programming	6.0
Don't feel safe at parks	4.6
Do not like the natural features (beauty)	3.5
Facilities are not well maintained	2.2
Need transportation to get to the parks	0.7
Other	21.5

Respondents indicate a wide variety of reasons for not visiting Township Parks more frequently. However, one reason stands out with more than 40 percent of the sample endorsing it—namely, too busy or not interested. About one in five respondents (19 percent) indicate that their disability or age keeps them from visiting the parks more. About one in four respondents

---

<sup>4</sup> Seven respondents used the “other” text box to report that they did not know where the parks were located or that they were new to the area (which may – or may not – mean that they are unaware of the parks’ location).

report that the parks either do not have the features or amenities they want (15 percent) or the equipment or facilities they need (9 percent).

A substantial number of respondents also provided “text” to explain “other” reasons that they do not use Township parks more. Four reasons predominate. Thirty-five respondents reported that they had no need for parks (or no longer had a need because, for example, “grandkids don’t play baseball anymore”) or that they were “not a park person” or were new to the area. Twenty-two respondents explained that there was something specific they did not like about Township parks. These very diverse responses included “lack of crossing (safe) area near Pickard/Isabella,” “need walking paths or dog park or something!,” and “not enough natural landscape at McDonald Park.” Twenty respondents simply noted that they use city or county parks, and 11 respondents noted that other options were available to them including “have my own land,” “I own my own recreational property somewhere else,” and “my dog likes other parks.”

Finally, in this section respondents who report that they do use the township parks (i.e., they provided an answer in Table 9a other than “never”) were asked which park they visit most frequently. While the question explicitly asked respondents to indicate the park they used “most,” some respondents chose to check the boxes associated with the two parks; hence, in data entry, a additional option “both parks” was added. Table 10 summarizes responses with a percentage distribution.

**Print Table 10: Most Frequently Visited Union Township Park:  
Percentage Distributions for Those Who Visit Parks**

	<b>Percent</b>
McDonald Park	67.4
Jameson Park	27.7
Both parks (option added during data entry)	4.9

McDonald Park is much more likely to be visited frequently than Jameson Park, by those who do visit the parks within a year. In fact, two thirds of respondents indicate visiting McDonald Park most frequently.

All respondents were asked to indicate the park that they used most outside of Union Township and their reasons for preferring that park. These open-ended responses were coded into a series of discrete categories. Only 331 respondents listed another park that they frequent outside of the Township—perhaps because they do not use other parks or because they simply did not want to take the time to provide responses to these open-ended questions. Table 11a provides the percentages of respondents indicating use of each non-Township park, while Table 11b summarizes reasons for enjoying that park.

**Print Table 11a: Most Frequently Visiting Park Outside of Union Township, for Respondents Listing Another Park (N=331)**

	<b>Percent</b>
Island Park (including Nelson Park)	19.9
Island Park and Others	16.3
Deerfield Park	5.7
Deerfield Park and Others	9.4
City Parks	9.4
Other	39.3

**Print Table 11b: Why Residents Prefer Other Parks Outside Union Township: Number of Respondents**

	<b>Number</b>
Trails (walking/biking/skiing)	149
Nature Trails	13
Special Features	99
Other comments	55
Nature	49
Events (including Farmers Market)	37
Location (convenience)	18
Multiple options available (lots to do)	10

More than one third of the respondents who provided responses mentioned visiting Island Park (either as a single entry or as an entry coupled with other parks. About one sixth of respondents highlighted using Deerfield Park (singly or as one park listed with one or more others). The category other is the largest coded with almost 40 percent of responses; as expected these responses are diverse ranging from state parks to those outside of Michigan.

Two reasons for using these non-Township parks stand out. Respondents mention visiting these other parks because of the options to use trails—for walking, biking, or skiing.

Illustrative comments coded into this large category are:

*Like to hike and bike*

*Variety of interesting trails and well kept*

*Walking/running*

Almost 100 respondents mention a special feature of the park that attracts them. These features include:

*Boating, fishing*

*Disc golf, fishing*

*Soccer, sports, outside rec play*

*Pickleball*

*Sledding hill, river access, fishing*

A smaller number of respondents mentioned that they visit these other parks because of events held at the park. The following comments show the range of events highlighted:

*Farmers Market*

*Business outings*

*Graduation/reunions*

Forty nine respondents discussed visiting non-Township parks in order to be in nature.

Comments included in this category are these:

*Peaceful, beautiful*

*Love the trails, beauty, nature, hiking, wildlife*

*Can see the Chippewa River*

Parks differ in the amenities and features available to visitors. Respondents using Island Park were especially likely to note the events available there while those mentioning Deerfield highlighted the trails.

### **Satisfaction with Township Parks**

Respondents were asked three questions about their satisfaction with township parks and about their views of the condition of the parks. They were asked to respond using a five-point scale where 5 is the top score. These questions were only asked to respondents who reported use of the township parks, with a summary of their responses available in Table 12.

**Print Table 12: Overall Satisfaction with the Condition of Township Parks:  
Percentage Distributions for Those Who Visit Parks**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5 (Top)</b>
How would you rate the overall condition of any Township parks you have visited?	1.8	3.2	17.0	46.5	31.6
How would you rate your overall level of satisfaction with McDonald Park facilities?	2.3	2.9	15.5	43.9	35.5
How would you rate your overall level of satisfaction with Jameson Park facilities?	3.3	7.7	21.5	43.1	24.4

Respondents who use Township parks rate them positively. In fact, almost 80 percent give the overall condition of any Township parks “you have visited” a rating of 4 or 5 (of 5). A comparable number give this positive rating to their overall level of satisfaction with McDonald park facilities. Satisfaction with Jameson Park facilities is somewhat lower, but only about 10

percent give Jameson Park facilities a low rating of 1 or 2, and two thirds provide a high rating of 4 or 5.

### **Preferences for New or Enhanced Park Options**

A series of questions asked respondents their views about new parks and recreational facilities in township and about the ways that existing parks could be improved. One question asked respondents their preferences for additional recreation opportunities for people in various age groups, ranging from toddlers to seniors. They were asked to check up to three responses. Table 13 summaries responses with the percentage of respondents indicating a preference for additional opportunities for each age category.

**Print Table 13: Population Preference for Additional Recreation Opportunities: Percentage Distributions**

<b>Age for Additional Recreation</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Toddlers (0-3 years of age)	7.2
Younger children (4-8 years of age)	18.1
Youth (9-13 years of age)	28.1
Teens (14-19 years of age)	41.3
Young adults	20.9
Seniors	38.1
Other adults	13.9
Persons with disabilities	20.5
NONE OF THESE POPULATIONS	17.0

Respondents’ opinions are diverse. While the age category teens (14 to 19 years of age) receives the most support at 41 percent, at least 20 percent of the sample would also like to see more opportunities for youth (9-13 years of age), young adults, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

Another question focused on preferences regarding the acquisition of new public park land in various locations in the township. Respondents were asked to check no more than two options. Table 14 provides the percentages endorsing each option, including “no new park land is needed.”

**Print Table 14: Preference for New Public Park Land: Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Percent</b>
Additional land along the Chippewa River	29.9
New park on the south side of the Township	19.7
New park on the east side of the Township	12.3
NO NEW PARK LAND IS NEEDED	42.6
Other	11.4 <sup>5</sup>

In fact, the largest number of respondents choose the option “no new park land is needed,” with 43 percent endorsing this option. Thirty percent of respondents would like to see additional land along the Chippewa River available for new public park land.

An additional question asked respondents to endorse up to three priorities for improvements to an existing park or new recreational amenity in the Township. Table 15 summarizes responses, with the table ordered with endorsement percentages in descending order.

---

<sup>5</sup> Twenty-three of the 63 responses coded other are “don’t know” or “new to the area.”

**Print Table 15: Priorities for Improvements or New Recreational Amenities in Township Parks: Percentage Distributions**

<b>Improvements</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Focus on maintaining the existing park facilities	42.3
Expand network of paved pathways	32.1
Add a lighted outdoor running / walking loop course at McDonald Park	30.1
Trailhead parking for pathway to Shepherd	21.6
NONE	15.6
Mountain biking trail	13.8
Add a park with amenities for families with small children	11.2
Add a covered pavilion next to the McDonald Park playground	10.3
Other	7.6 <sup>6</sup>
Develop more sport fields	6.0

More than 40 percent of the sample indicate that there should be a focus on maintaining the existing park facilities; this choice is the one endorsed by the largest number of respondents. Another 16 percent indicate “none” when asked about improvements or recreational amenities.

By way of contrast, three improvements or new amenities are supported by at least 20 percent of the sample: expand network of paved pathways, add a lighted outdoor running/walking loop course at McDonald Park, and trailhead parking for pathway to Shepherd.

---

<sup>6</sup> There was no pattern to the 43 responses coded as “other.”

Respondents were asked to indicate their priorities for new public facilities, amenities or services in the township. They were asked to check up to five options from a long list of 22 options and “other.” “None are needed” was also provided. Table 16 provides the percentage of respondents checking each option, with the table organized so that the option receiving the highest percentages of “checks” appears first.

**Print Table 16: Priorities of New Public Facilities, Amenities or Services in the Township:  
Percentage Distributions**

<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Paved walking and biking paths	44.1
Unpaved hiking / cross-country ski trails	20.2
Nature preserve	19.6
Pickleball courts	18.5
Covered group picnic shelters	17.1
NONE ARE NEEDED	17.1
Public wireless Internet access	16.7
Sledding hill	14.9
Small neighborhood parks	14.4
Outdoor amphitheater	12.6
Other	12.4 <sup>7</sup>
Bird watching / wildlife observation	12.3
Athletic courts, multi-sport	12.1
Splash pad / spray park	10.6
Ice rink	10.6
Playgrounds	8.1
Technology charging stations	6.1
Disc golf course	6.0
Climbing wall	6.0
Athletic fields – lacrosse, football, soccer	5.0
Athletic fields – baseball or softball	4.5
BMX / freestyle biking course	2.6
Skateboarding facilities	1.3

---

<sup>7</sup> Thirty-six of the 75 responses coded as “other” mentioned a swimming pool or aquatic facility.

One response for new park facilities stands out from the rest. More than 40 percent of respondents would like to see more paved walking and biking paths. Fourteen other options receive support from between 10 and 20 percent of the sample:

Finally, respondents were also asked to indicate the type of accommodations, if any, they believe were needed to better serve people with disabilities. Table 17 uses percentages to summarize responses. Percentages will not equal 100 because respondents could check as many responses as apply.

**Print Table 17: Accommodations Needed to Better Serve Those with Disabilities: Percentage Distributions**

<b>Accommodation Needed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
NONE	74.2
Barrier-free access improvements	17.9
Adaptive equipment	11.9
Non-visual assistance (Braille)	2.2
Sign language interpreter for the deaf	1.4
Other	3.4

Almost three quarters of respondents indicated that no accommodations were needed to better serve people with disabilities. Eighteen percent reported that there needed to be barrier-free access improvements.

**Additional Suggestions and Comments: Print Sample**

The questionnaire ended on page 6 by providing respondents with two blank spaces where they could write in comments. The first asked respondents what they “believe is the

MOST IMPORTANT issue to address for the future of the Township.” Each open-ended response was coded into one or more discrete category. The categories along with the numbers in each are found in Table 18. Key themes are such as “administration” are left-justified in the table. Then sub-themes appear directly below and indented. Some comments are coded only in the main theme (e.g., the comment “infrastructure”), while others are coded only in the sub-theme (e.g., an explicit mention of roads, which is a type infrastructure). Such coding of qualitative data is a time-consuming and labor-intensive process. The qualitative software package NVivo was used to help with coding and data storage and retrieval. Any one comment from a respondent might be coded into more than one category, because some comments addressed more than one issue. Table 18 provides the numbers of respondents whose comment is found in each code category.

**Print Table 18: Most Important Issue to Address:  
Code Category and Number of Respondents**

<b>Code Category</b>	<b>Number</b>
Infrastructure	12
Bike paths	2
Sidewalks	39
Sidewalks and Bike paths	6
Roads	59
Water	38
Sewer	9
Water and Sewer	4
Administration	31
Board of Trustees	3
Tax Rate	6
Tax Amount	23
Use of Tax Dollars	12
Community	0
Housing	9
Safety	17
Public Safety	12
Safety Features	29
Quality and Enhancement	10
Recreation and Activities	23
Sustainability	14
Development/Economic Issues	
Stay Rural/No Changes	32
More Development	25
Zoning and Regulations	28
Services	31
Miscellaneous	21

Many of the themes discussed in the tables above are repeated in responses to the open-ended questions. For example, the largest number of comments focus on infrastructure, with the

specific comments about roads, sidewalks, and water predominating. Illustrative comments focused on roads include:

*Maintain quality roads*

*I would like to see East Valley Rd. between Isabella and Summerton paved. It was a muddy mess most of the year.*

*Fix side streets*

Included in the broad infrastructure category are explicit references to sidewalks and bike paths. Three such responses follow:

*Complete sidewalk network*

*Paved walkways on high traffic roads*

*The most immediate need in my part of the Township is to complete the sidewalks near the Charter School on Isabella Rd. before some children are killed by the careless drivers on the road.*

A variety of concerns were expressed about water in the Township. They include following:

*Clean and safe drinking water! I don't care what your tests say; I am tired of seeing a "slick" in my water.*

*Better water quality (drinking)*

*Water is hard and destructive*

A number of comments focused on the general issue of Township administration, the taxation rate, and on the use of tax dollars, more specifically. Comments coded in these categories include:

*Become more user friendly*

*Fixing the poor administration! Getting them to work with the Isabella Road Commission*

*The township leaders need to have a vision for the future. Status quo is failure.*

*Cut my taxes*

*Keep property taxes in check*

*Save for rainy day—keep taxes down. Save for future expenses.*

*Wasteful spending increasing taxes*

*The most important issue is to spend the money wisely to keep our taxes down.*

*Conservative money management*

Additional comments focused on the community. Predominant in this category are comments about ways of increasing safety (which is labelled “safety features” in the table) and recreation and activities. Respondents thought that safety could be improved in these ways:

*Better lighting at intersections, maybe more rumble strips and stop signs, weed grass cut on sides of dirt roads, better salt/brine on winter roads would be helpful.*

*Build pedestrian walkway on the bridge over freeway (Broadway), enforce speed limits*

*Safety for residents—better lighting on streets*

As seen above, suggestions about improving recreation vary considerably. Comments coded in this category include:

*Attracting younger families through improved parks, establishing adult recreation programs as someone not from the area, it would support meeting more neighbors*

*Recreation facilities for young children/families*

*Things to keep teens/young adults active*

Respondents had a good deal to say about economic issues and development, but, again, their opinions are diverse. Some comments focus on maintaining the rural quality of the Township, opposed to certain kinds of development.

*Keep Ag Land and Open Green Space*

*Keep industry out. More residential.*

*No cannabis dispensaries*

Others—such as those below—endorse more development.

*Becoming more business friendly and transitioning from agriculture.*

*Bring in business for job growth*

*Need to focus on getting back to a developer friendly and welcoming community.*

Some comments expressed concerns about existing zoning and regulations or their enforcement.

*Cleaning up the messy yards, enforcing people to take care of their home/property*

*Less zoning and building restrictions*

*Reasonable zoning allowing more commercial growth*

Respondents also mentioned a variety of (new) services that they would like to see. These include leaf pickup, Internet access, 24/7 public transportation, and mosquito control. No one type of new service is supported by a large number of respondents.

The final question on the survey provided space for respondents to “add any additional comments about the Township’s services and facilities.” These open-ended responses were also coded into a set of discrete categories, that are similar to but also distinct from those created to summarize respondents’ view of the most important issue for the Township to address. There were fewer responses, suggesting the utility of creating a smaller number of broader categories. Table 19 provides the code categories, along with the number of comments coded into each. Again, any one respondent’s comment may be coded in more than one category.

**Print Table 19: Comments:  
Code Category and Number of Respondents**

<b>Code category</b>	<b>Number</b>
Infrastructure	1
Sidewalks and Bike paths	10
Roads	7
Water and Sewer	11
Administration	19
Taxes, Fees, Spending	29
Community	0
Safety	17
Recreation and Services	29
Development (General or Supportive of specific projects)	8
Stay Rural/No Changes	8
Zoning and Regulations	22
Miscellaneous	14
General Positive Comment (not coded elsewhere)	34
Negative Comment (not coded elsewhere)	4

The largest number of responses in the final comments box are coded in the category “general positive comment.” They include the following:

*Everything seems to be going fine!*

*Fantastic job in general for township operations. Great job all the way around. Thank you!*

*Thank you for conducting this survey and asking for resident feedback.*

Infrastructure comments again included references to roads, sidewalks and bike paths, and water and sewer systems. The comments about roads at times zeroed in on a specific road

with problems, with many of the sidewalks/bike paths and water/sewer comments similar to those highlighted above. Illustrative comments include:

*Paved rural roads would be nice*

*South Crawford Road is very narrow. Vehicles travel at high speeds. Crawford Road needs to be widened.*

*Need to connect the bike path to Clare, MI*

*The recent sidewalk projects have been a huge improvement.*

*Water gets brown. Lots of calcium/lime*

*Sewer service along Lincoln Rd. would be helpful.*

Comments about “administration” and the combined category of taxes, fees, and spending include the following, with the first two focused on the general issue and the last two on taxes, fees, and spending:

*I have called the Township on different occasions, and the people on the phone don't have the answers, or staff are not working on the property.*

*Please be personally engaging! Make common sense decisions about all matters. Seek first to understand before you wish to be understood.*

*Lower the taxes and reduce useless township jobs and projects.*

*Slow down the spending.*

The final comment section also led some respondents to make very specific requests for more recreation or other services. These comments include:

*Add leaf pickup and recycling*

*Desperately need street sweepers.*

*Love the idea of a jogging track/loop at McDonald Park.*

*Thank you! Please seriously consider a pool. PLEASE!*

Safety concerns mentioned were also often very specific, such as:

*Intersection on 20 and Leaton by casino is dangerous. Trucks and cars always run the red light! Lower the speed limit or put more lighting or flashing lights up.*

*Speeding is a problem in areas of apartment complexes. Young people driving 15-25 mph over the posted limit is routine.*

*My neighborhood used to feel safe, even without street lights. Now it's loud screaming and partying from rental houses. It doesn't feel safe.*

As seen by the four comments below, views about development are again mixed and include these two supportive of new development projects and another two against specific kinds of development.

*Bring in manufacturing jobs and work with them not restrict them.*

*Shopping areas badly needed in west. Most important – grocery shopping and mall area.*

*No more apartments!!! It's killing this community.*

*Please oppose windmills and solar panels—save our land and wildlife.*

Respondents used the open text box at the end of the survey to express frustration with zoning and regulations:

*Rule about testing sump pumps yearly is unnecessary and expensive!*

*Way too strict on permits and allowing businesses to come her and grow – commonly hear how tough UT is to work with.*

*Zoning dept. has too much power. Let residents live their lived with less township control.*

## **Demographics of the Online Sample**

The demographics of the online sample differ in marked and expected ways from those of the print sample. Online Table 1a presents data on the years that respondents have lived in

Isabella County and in Union Township. Online Table 1b provides information on the ages of household members, and Online Table 1c includes information on the demographic characteristics of respondents.

**Online Table 1a: Years Lived in Isabella County and Union Township:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>0-5 years</b>	<b>6-10 years</b>	<b>11-15 years</b>	<b>16-20 years</b>	<b>21-30 years</b>	<b>31 or more years</b>
How many years have you lived in Isabella County, including your years in Union Township?	37.5	17.5	13.8	7.5	15.0	8.7
How many years have you lived in Union Township altogether?	57.5	13.8	11.2	2.5	10.0	5.0

**Online Table 1b: Household Age Demographics:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Household Size</b>	
One	24.4
Two	41.0
Three or four	29.4
Five or more	5.1
<b>Percent One or More in Household</b>	
17 years of age and under	24.4
18-34 years old	53.8
35-54 years old	34.6
55-74 years old	20.5
75 or more years old	5.1

**Online Table 1c: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Residence Location</b>	
High density apartment or condo complex	54.5
Subdivision / neighborhood	35.1
Rural / agricultural	6.5
Other	3.9

	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Age of Respondent</b>	
18-25 years old	21.8
26-35 years old	24.4
36-45 years old	15.3
46-55 years old	16.7
56-65 years old	10.0
66-75 years old	7.7
76+ years old	3.8
<b>Race of Respondent</b>	
African American	2.7
Asian	1.4
Hispanic	0.0
Native American / American Indian	6.8
White	90.5
Other	4.1
<b>Yearly Household Income</b>	
Less than \$25,000	20.3
\$25,000 up to \$50,000	36.5
\$50,000 up to \$75,000	23.0
\$75,000 up to \$100,000	8.1
\$100,000 up to \$150,000	6.8
More than \$150,000	5.4

The median number of years that respondents in the online sample have lived in Isabella County is eight years, with 24 percent being county residents for more than 20 years. Almost 60 percent of online sample respondents have lived in Union Township for five or fewer years, and only 15 percent have lived in the county for 21 or more years. As expected, the majority of respondents in the online sample live in high density apartment or condo complexes, although more than one third live in subdivisions/neighborhood.

Almost one quarter of the respondents in the online sample live alone with more than one third living in a household with three or more people. Almost one quarter of these household include a child 17 years of age or younger, with only about five percent of these households including a senior citizen 75 years of age or older.

The median age of online sample respondents is 36 years with 11 percent over 65 years of age. More than 90 percent of the online sample identify as white. Twenty percent of the online sample report a household income of less than \$25,000, with 12 percent indicating their household income is \$100,000 or more.

## Online Sample: Quality of Resources and Services Provided by the Township

**Online Table 2a: Ratings of Union Township Services:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>A Excellent</b>	<b>B Good</b>	<b>C Adequate</b>	<b>D Fair</b>	<b>E Poor</b>	<b>Don't know/ Do not use</b>
Fire services provided to the Township by the City of Mount Pleasant	28.1	15.7	4.5	0.0	0.0	51.7
Police services provided to the Township by the Isabella County Sheriff's department	25.8	29.2	12.4	3.4	3.4	25.8
Customer service from parks and recreation staff	23.6	19.1	3.4	0.0	0.0	53.9
Customer service from Township Hall staff	16.1	13.8	5.7	2.3	3.4	58.6
Union Township's water and sewer services	13.6	23.9	25.0	14.8	15.9	6.8
Curbside recycling	10.2	11.4	4.5	8.0	3.4	62.5
Customer service from water and sewer utilities staff	10.1	11.2	13.5	3.4	4.5	57.3
Overall government services provided by Union Township	6.9	37.9	32.2	3.4	2.3	17.2
The rental inspection process	6.7	15.7	7.9	3.4	3.4	62.9
The zoning and building permit application process	5.6	3.4	6.7	6.7	1.1	76.4
Responsiveness of Board of Trustees members to your concerns	1.1	2.3	11.5	5.7	1.1	78.2

Two key conclusions are apparent when members of the online sample rate Township services. First, more than one half of the sample respond “don’t know” when asked about eight of the 11 services. Second, positive ratings of excellent or good outnumber negative ratings of fair or poor in all but one case.

**Online Table 2b: Ratings of Union Township Services:  
Percentage Distributions for Respondents with an Opinion**

	<b>A Excellent</b>	<b>B Good</b>	<b>C Adequate</b>	<b>D Fair</b>	<b>E Poor</b>	<b>N</b>
Fire services provided to the Township by the City of Mount Pleasant	57.9	34.2	7.9	0.0	0.0	38
Customer service from parks and recreation staff	50.0	42.1	7.9	0.0	0.0	38
Customer service from Township Hall staff	37.1	34.3	14.3	5.7	8.6	35
Police services provided to the Township by the Isabella County Sheriff's department	36.7	36.7	16.7	5.0	5.0	60
Curbside recycling	28.1	31.3	12.5	18.8	9.4	32
The zoning and building permit application process	23.8	14.3	28.6	28.6	4.8	21
Customer service from water and sewer utilities staff	21.6	27.0	32.4	8.1	10.8	37
The rental inspection process	16.7	43.3	20.0	10.0	10.0	30
Union Township's water and sewer services	14.5	25.0	27.6	15.8	17.1	76
Overall government services provided by Union Township	7.4	44.1	41.2	4.4	2.9	68
Responsiveness of Board of Trustees members to your concerns	5.3	10.5	52.6	26.3	5.3	19

At least one half of online respondents with an opinion give an excellent rating to fire services provided to the Township by the City of Mount Pleasant and customer service from

parks and recreation staff. At least 50 percent of these respondents give one of the top two grades to five other services: customer service from Township Hall staff, police services provided to the Township by the Isabella County Sheriff’s department, curbside recycling, the rental inspection process, overall government services provided by Union Township. More than one quarter of these respondents give fair or poor ratings to the responsiveness of Board of Trustees members of your concerns, Union Township’s water and sewer services, the zoning and building permit application process, and curbside recycling. Note again the small numbers of people on which these percentages are based.

### **Online Sample: Priorities and Special Projects**

**Online Table 3: Priorities for Use of Tax Dollars:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>High Priority</b>	<b>Medium Priority</b>	<b>Low Priority</b>
Improving roads in the Township	51.7	41.6	6.7
Snowplowing of sidewalks	51.7	31.5	16.9
Improved street lighting	46.1	40.4	13.5
More sidewalks and pathways in the Township	43.8	40.4	15.7
Recycling for apartments	42.7	27.0	30.3
Enhanced public safety services in the Township	39.3	41.6	19.1
Reducing property blight (messiness) in the Township	29.2	40.4	30.3
Electric vehicle charging stations	19.1	18.0	62.9
Township ordinance enforcement	13.5	46.1	40.4

Majorities of online respondents give high priority ratings to improving roads in the Township and snowplowing of sidewalks, with improving roads seen as a low priority by fewer than 10 percent of the sample. At least 40 percent of these respondents see Township ordinance enforcement and electric vehicle charging stations as a low priority. Opinions vary considerably on other initiatives: for example, about 30 percent of respondents see reducing blight as a high priority and a similar percentage see this as a low priority.

**Online Table 4: Priority for Spending Pandemic Relief Funds:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Percent</b>
Township infrastructure	50.6
Recreation	28.9
General Township services	20.5

A majority of online survey respondents want to spend pandemic relief funds on Township infrastructure, with the remainder split almost evenly between recreation spending and spending on general Township services.

## Online Sample: Development and Land Use

**Online Table 5: Support for Proposals for Development and Land Use:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Definitely Support</b>	<b>Probably Support</b>	<b>Probably Oppose</b>	<b>Definitely Oppose</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
Protecting the residential quality of existing neighborhoods	57.3	32.6	6.7	0.0	3.4
Protecting existing farmland in the Township	47.2	40.4	3.4	0.0	9.0
Developing more single family housing in the Township	37.1	42.7	6.7	5.6	7.9
Developing more multi-family housing in the Township	34.8	25.8	21.3	7.9	10.1
Use of farmland for large-scale solar energy production	34.8	24.7	15.7	20.2	4.5
Acquiring land to expand opportunities for advanced manufacturing and clean technology businesses	21.3	38.2	14.6	9.0	16.9
Growth in industrial development in the Township	12.5	40.9	23.9	10.2	12.5

More than one half of the online sample expresses definite support for protecting the residential quality of existing neighborhoods, and almost one half definitely supports protecting existing farmland in the Township. Support for developing more single family housing in the Township exceeds opposition by a ratio of 6.5 to 1. More than 30 percent of the online sample probably or definitely opposes using farmland for large-scale solar energy production and growth in industrial development in the Township, with almost as much opposition to developing more multi-family housing and acquiring land to expand opportunities for advanced manufacturing and clean technology businesses.

## Amount of Information about Issues and Ways of Receiving Information

**Online Table 6: Amount of Information about the Township:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Good Deal of Knowledge</b>	<b>Some Knowledge</b>	<b>Little to No Knowledge</b>
Accessing services in the Township (who to call; where to find information)	12.4	55.1	32.6
The Township Master Plan for land use	3.4	11.2	85.4

Relatively few of these online respondents report having a good deal of information about accessing services in the Township or the Township Master Plan for land use, with one third expressing little or no knowledge about the first topic and 85 percent indicating so little knowledge about the Master Plan.

**Online Table 7: Preferred Method of Receiving Township Information About Parks and Recreation Facilities and Services:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Percent</b>
Social media	57.9
Township email newsletter	42.5
Township’s website	40.0
Township print newsletter	35.6
Information displayed at parks	30.7
The Morning Sun Newspaper	24.3
Radio	8.2
Attending meetings (in person or virtual)	2.8
Public access television	5.4
Other	2.4

Almost 60 percent of respondents from the online sample report a preference for receiving information about parks and recreation facilities and services from social media. At least 40 percent of the sample endorse a Township email newsletter and the Township’s website.

## Online Sample: Quality of Life

**Online Table 8: Quality of Life Living in Union Township:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>
How would you describe your quality of life living in Union Township today?	10.1	50.6	34.8	3.4	1.1
How would you rate the changes that have taken place in the quality of life in Union Township over the past 10 years?	4.5	25.8	28.1	7.9	33.7

Few respondents from the online sample rate the quality of life living in Union Township as excellent, although about one half provide a good rating. Almost 40 percent of these respondents choose the options of fair or poor. About one third of the online sample has no opinion about change in the quality of life over the last 10 years; those with an opinion are split between the favorable options of excellent or good (30 percent) and the less favorable options of fair or poor (36 percent),

## Online Sample: Park Land Use and Preference

Survey respondents were asked about Union Township's available parks, McDonald Park and Jameson Park, as well as additional recreational facilities in neighboring areas. Participants were queried regarding frequency of park use, satisfaction with the Township's facilities, and recommendations for recreational amenities moving forward.

**Online Table 9a: Sufficient Parks and Green Space Areas Near Residences:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Sufficient Parks and Green Spaces Near Residence</b>	
Yes	56.2
No	37.1
Not Sure	6.7
<b>Frequency of Visiting Township Parks during Past 12 Months</b>	
At least once a week	3.4
A few times per month	10.1
About once per month	6.7
A few times during the year	25.8
Never <sup>8</sup>	53.9

A majority of online respondents report that there are sufficient parks and green space areas near where they live. More than one half of these respondents never visit Township parks, with only 13 percent visiting at least a few times a month.

---

<sup>8</sup> If a respondent answered “Never” for Table 8, questions from Table 9 and 10 were not displayed for the respondent to answer.

**Online Table 9b: Reasons Household Members Have Not Visited Township Parks:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Percent</b>
I don't know where the parks are located	32.9
We are too busy or not interested	28.0
Other	24.4
Inconvenient locations	17.3
Don't have features or amenities I want	14.6
My disability or age	13.4
Need transportation to get to the parks	13.4
Don't feel safe at parks	11.0
Lack of recreation programming	9.8
Facilities are not well maintained	4.9
Don't have equipment or facilities I need	4.9
Do not like the natural features (beauty)	3.7

Two responses predominate for reasons for not visiting Township parks: about one third do not know where the parks are located and almost as many report being too busy or not interested.

**Online Table 10: Most Frequently Visited Union Township Park:  
Percentage Distributions for Those Who Visit Parks (N=38)**

	<b>Percent</b>
McDonald Park	39.5
Jameson Park	60.5

Sixty percent of the online respondents who do visit the parks are most likely to visit Jameson Park.

**Online Table 11a: Most Frequently Visiting Park Outside of Union Township,  
for Respondents Listing Another Park (N=45)**

	<b>Number</b>
Island Park (including Nelson Park)	11
Island Park and Others	9
Deerfield Park	4
Deerfield Park and Others	0
City Parks	4
Other	17

Only 45 online respondents provided information on the park they visit most frequently outside of Union Township. Respondents were most likely to mention Island Park either as the one park they visit or along with one or more other parks. (Numbers rather than percentages are provided here to remind readers of the small number of respondents who answered these questions.)

**Online Table 11b: Why Residents Prefer Other Parks Outside Union Township:  
Code Category and Number of Respondents (N=45)**

<b>Code Category</b>	<b>Number</b>
Trails (walking/biking/skiing)	20
Special Features	11
Nature	8
Events (including Farmers Market)	9
Miscellaneous	16

Online respondents who provided information on why they visit these non-Township parks were most likely to mention the trails for walking, biking, or skiing. Comments in this category include these:

*Kids enjoy the river area as well as trails.*

*Running, cycling, social events*

*Excellent trails to walk on*

These online respondents using non-Township parks also noted the special features available in their preferred park including:

*Timber Town playground*

*pickleball courts*

*fishing access.*

## Online Sample: Satisfaction with Township Parks

**Online Table 12: Overall Satisfaction with the Condition of Township Parks:  
Percentage Distributions for Those Who Visit Parks (N=38)**

	1	2	3	4	5 (Top)
How would you rate the overall condition of any Township parks you have visited?	2.6	2.6	42.1	36.8	15.8
How would you rate your overall level of satisfaction with McDonald Park facilities?	3.1	3.1	37.5	40.6	15.6
How would you rate your overall level of satisfaction with Jameson Park facilities?	5.6	5.6	47.2	25.0	16.7

Few online respondents rate the conditions of the Township parks as low categories 1 or 2 (of 5), and few express low levels of satisfaction with either McDonald or Jameson Park facilities. By way of contrast, fewer than 20 percent of these respondents give the parks the top rating of 5. About 40 percent choose the middle response of 3 in answering each of these three questions.

## Preferences for New or Enhance Park Options

**Online Table 13: Population Preference for Additional Recreation Opportunities:  
Percentage Distributions**

<b>Age for Additional Recreation</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Toddlers (0-3 years of age)	17.1
Younger children (4-8 years of age)	20.7
Youth (9-13 years of age)	24.4
Teens (14-19 years of age)	41.5
Young adults	42.7
Seniors	34.1
Other adults	18.3
Persons with disabilities	37.8
NONE OF THESE POPULATIONS	11.0

About 40 percent of online respondents would like to see additional recreation opportunities for teens, for young adults, and for persons with disabilities although non-trivial numbers of respondents endorse more opportunities for each of the age groups mentioned.

**Online Table 14: Preference for New Public Park Land:  
Percentage Distributions**

	<b>Percent</b>
Additional land along the Chippewa River	30.9
New park on the south side of the Township	40.7
New park on the east side of the Township	27.2
NO NEW PARK LAND IS NEEDED	23.8
Other	4.9

While about one quarter of online respondents think that no new park land is needed, the largest number of respondents indicate that a new park is needed on the south side of the Township.

**Online Table 15: Priorities for Improvements or New Recreational Amenities in Township Parks: Percentage Distributions**

<b>Improvements</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Focus on maintaining the existing park facilities	47.4
Expand network of paved pathways	41.0
Add a lighted outdoor running / walking loop course at McDonald Park	32.1
Add a park with amenities for families with small children	26.9
Mountain biking trail	21.8
Trailhead parking for pathway to Shepherd	16.7
NONE	10.3
Add a covered pavilion next to the McDonald Park playground	10.3
Other	5.1
Develop more sport fields	2.6

The largest number of online respondents report that a priority should be placed on maintaining the existing park facilities. More than 40 percent have a preference for expanding the network of paved pathways. At least 20 percent of the sample endorse adding a lighted outdoor running/walking loop course at McDonald Park, adding a park with amenities for small children, and adding a mountain biking trail.

**Online Table 16: Priorities of New Public Facilities, Amenities or Services in the Township:  
Percentage Distributions**

<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Paved walking and biking paths	45.0
Nature preserve	40.0
Small neighborhood parks	31.3
Public wireless Internet access	26.3
Outdoor amphitheater	22.5
Bird watching / wildlife observation	22.5
Unpaved hiking / cross-country ski trails	21.3
Splash pad / spray park	18.8
Covered group picnic shelters	18.8
Sledding hill	17.5
Playgrounds	16.3
Ice rink	11.3
Technology charging stations	11.3
Other	10.0
NONE ARE NEEDED	8.8
Disc golf course	8.8
Pickleball courts	8.8
BMX / freestyle biking course	7.5
Climbing wall	6.3
Athletic courts, multi-sport	5.0
Skateboarding facilities	3.8
Athletic fields – baseball or softball	1.3
Athletic fields – lacrosse, football, soccer	1.3

At least 40 percent of the online sample would like to see paved walking and biking paths and a nature preserve. Almost one third would like to see new small neighborhood parks, and

more than one quarter support public wireless Internet access. Ten other options are endorsed by between 10 and 20 percent of the online sample.

**Online Table 17: Accommodations Needed to Better Serve Those with Disabilities: Percentage Distributions**

<b>Accommodation Needed</b>	<b>Percent</b>
NONE	48.2
Barrier-free access improvements	34.9
Adaptive equipment	22.9
Non-visual assistance (Braille)	14.5
Sign language interpreter for the deaf	10.8
Other	4.8

Almost one half of the online sample indicates that no additional accommodations are needed to better serve people with disabilities. About one third of respondents report that barrier-free access improvements are needed.

### **Additional Suggestions and Comments**

A small number of online respondents did choose to answer one or both of the final open-ended questions focused on the most important issue facing the township and other comments. Their responses were combined for coding purposes. The code categories along with the number of comments in each are found in Table 18.

**Online Table 18: Most Important Issue to Address and Other Comments:  
Code Category and Number of Respondents**

<b>Code Category</b>	<b>Number</b>
Infrastructure	2
Sidewalks and Bike paths	7
Roads	8
Water and Sewer	11
Administration	3
Community	15
Safety	14
Development/Economic Issues	4
Services and Miscellaneous	7
Positive Comment	1

Online respondents were most likely to comment on issues related to infrastructure or community. Concerns were again expressed about the water/sewer system, roads, and sidewalks and bike paths. A sampling of these infrastructure comments are found below:

*Water quality and its infrastructure*

*Water is poor for drinking and is bad on appliances, water heater, etc.*

*Street and road maintenance*

*Infrastructure such as roads and bridges*

*Walking trails to get to stores*

*Improving walkability and bike infrastructure*

The general category “community” included diverse comments including the following:

*Cleaner environment; there is always trash everywhere*

*Year-round homeless shelter/better resources available for the homeless*

*Lack of shared community. This is especially jarring after living in [CITY] for 18 years.*

Some online respondents focused explicitly on safety concerns. Such comments include:

*Safety and areas for small children to explore*

*More lighted sidewalks*

*Public safety services (police, fire, EMT, etc.)*

### **Subgroup Analyses for Print Sample**

It is useful to explore whether subgroups of the print sample have distinct views about services, priorities, land use, and the parks. Comparisons were made between respondents in the print sample who live in a household with children (0 to 17 years of age) and those who do not and between respondents in the print sample who had lived in Union Township for 1 to 20 years and those who had lived in the Township for 21 or more years. Of course, these factors are not independent of one another. Respondents with children in the household are more likely than those with no children to have lived in the township for 1 to 20 years (84 percent versus 39 percent). The average age of respondents in households with children is 44 years compared to an average age of 66 years for respondents with no children in the household.

There are few statistically significant (at the .05 level) subgroup differences when looking at views about Township resources and services.<sup>9</sup> The only distinct difference is that respondents with fewer years in the Township are more likely to say “don’t know” when asked to rate Township services. For example, 25 percent of residents who had lived in the Township for 1 to 20 years indicate that they “don’t know/did not use” customer service from Township Hall staff compared to 11 percent of residents who had lived in the Township for 21 years or more. Those with longer time in the Township are more likely than those with less time to give low priority to more sidewalks and pathways in the Township (41 percent to 31 percent); those with less time in the Township are more likely than those with longer tenure to give low priority to Township code enforcement (38 percent to 27 percent). These two groups differ somewhat in terms of use of farmland for large-scale solar energy production with 47 percent of respondents with less time in the Township expressing some level of support compared to 36 percent of those with more time in the Township.

There are also some differences in the ways that residents with longer and shorter time in the Township would like to receive information about parks and recreation facilities and services. They differences may reflect age differences as well as or in addition to factors associated with length of residence in the Township. Those with more time in the Township are more likely than those with less time to prefer receiving parks information through *The Morning Sun* (21 percent versus 15 percent), while those with less time in the Township are more likely than others to express a preference for receiving information displayed in the parks (16 percent

---

<sup>9</sup> We are using alpha = .05. That is, we are reporting differences from crosstabulations when the chi-square statistic leads us to conclude that we are 95 percent confident that a group difference exists in the population.

versus 9 percent), through social media (43 percent versus 26 percent ), and through an email Township newsletter (46 percent versus 33 percent).

Some differences are apparent when focused on park use and preferences for park amenities. More than one in five respondents with 1 to 20 years in the Township report that there are not sufficient parks and green space areas near their residence compared to only 13 percent of those living in the Township longer. Newer residents are more likely than longer-term residents to want to see additional recreation opportunities for youth (34 percent to 22 percent), for teens (49 percent versus 34 percent), and for “other adults” (18 percent versus 10 percent), while longer term residents are more likely to give priority to additional opportunities for seniors (44 versus 33 percent). Residents with less time in the Township are also more likely than those with more time in the Township to report wanting a new park on the south side of the Township (24 percent versus 16 percent) and the east side of the Township (17 percent versus 7 percent). Longer term residents are more likely than short timers to indicate that no new parkland is needed (50 percent versus 36 percent).

Given the differences highlighted above, it is not surprising that some differences in opinions about improvements or new facilities/amenities exist between those with 1 to 20 and 21 or more years in the Township. Print Table 20 summarizes these statistically significant differences showing the percent in favor of each park-related change. Note that the percentages in support of some of these suggestions are very small (and, consequently, the percentage-point difference between the two groups is small as well).

**Print Table 20: Differences in Opinions about Park Improvements and New Facilities/Amenities for Shorter-term and Longer-term Residents: Percents**

	<b>1-20 Years in Township</b>	<b>21 or More Years in Township</b>
Paved walking and biking paths	50.2	39.1
Lighted outdoor running/walking loop at McDonald park	38.7	22.0
Improvements to existing facilities: Focus on maintaining the existing park facilities	36.9	47.3
Trailhead parking for pathway to Shepherd	25.6	18.1
Unpaved hiking/cross country ski tails	24.1	16.4
Mountain biking trail	20.8	6.9
Sledding hill	19.2	11.1
Athletic courts, multisport	15.5	9.4
New facilities, amenities, or services: None are needed	12.7	20.6
Develop more sports fields	8.8	2.9
Disc golf course	8.6	3.7

Respondents in the print sample with and without children in the household give similar ratings to Township services. Respondents with children are more likely than those with no children to give high priority to more sidewalks and pathways in the Township (41 percent to 24 percent) and to give a low priority to Township ordinance enforcement (44 percent versus 30 percent) and to reducing blight (25 percent versus 16 percent).

When it comes to preferences for receiving parks-related information, residents without children in the household are more likely than those with children to express a preference for using public access television (7 percent versus 1 percent), while those with children are more likely than those without to prefer information through social media (57 percent versus 27

percent). These differences most probably reflect differences in age (as well as possible factors associated with household composition).

Residents with children in the household are more likely than others to report that there are not sufficient parks and green space areas near their residence (22 percent versus 14 percent). They are also more likely to use Township parks a few times a month or more (25 percent versus 10 percent). Respondents with children are more likely than those without children in the household to want additional recreation opportunities for young children (31 percent versus 13 percent), for youth (43 percent versus 23 percent), for teens (60 percent versus 36 percent). Respondents with children are more likely than those without to endorse a new park on the south side of the Township (31 percent versus 16 percent) and a new park on the east side of the Township (18 percent versus 10 percent).

It is not surprising that respondents in households with children have different opinions than respondents in households without children about improvements in existing facilities and the need for new facilities and amenities. Table 21 provides a summary of the opinions of these two groups.

**Print Table 21: Differences in Opinions about Park Improvements and New Facilities/Amenities for Respondents with and without Children in the Household:  
Percents**

	<b>No Children 0-17 Years</b>	<b>Yes Children 0-17 Years</b>
Paved walking and biking paths	41.1	55.0
A lighted outdoor running/walking loop course at McDonald Park	24.6	48.5
Expand network of paved pathways	29.2	42.1
No new parkland needed	45.8	33.1
Trailhead parking to Shepherd	19.8	27.8
Focus on maintaining existing park facilities	46.7	26.9
Mountain biking trail	10.4	25.4
Sledding hill	11.8	24.3
Athletic courts, multisport	9.3	21.4
Splash pad	7.5	20.0
Develop more sports fields	2.4	17.2
Ice rink	8.7	16.4
Playgrounds	6.4	14.3
Climbing wall	4.2	12.1
Athletic fields—lacrosse, football, soccer	3.1	10.7
Athletic fields—baseball or softball	3.1	8.6
New facilities, amenities, or services: None are needed	19.6	7.9
Improvements—None	18.1	6.7

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This report summarizes the responses of 638 Union Township residents who are property owners to a print survey in Fall, 2023 and the 89 other residents who responded to an online survey during the same time period. The print survey sample has a response rate of 33 percent (and a margin of error of about plus or minus 4 percent), while the online survey sample is not a scientific sample. Key findings are found below.

- The demographics of the two samples differ markedly and in expected ways. The median age of print sample respondents is 64 years, with the median number of years living in the township being 21 years. Almost 60 percent of print respondents report living in a “subdivision/neighborhood,” and the median income of households is in the category \$75,000 up to \$100,000. The median age of online respondents is 36 years, with the median number of years living in the township being four years. Fifty-five percent report living in a “high density apartment or condo complex,” and the median income is in the category \$25,000 up to \$50,000.
- At least 50 percent of print sample residents give grades of “A” (excellent) or “B” (good) to customer services from Township Hall staff, curbside recycling, and police services provided to the Township by the Isabella County Sheriff’s department. For five questions, more than one half of the print sample reports having no opinion when it comes to the rental inspection process, the zoning and building permit application process, the responsiveness of Board of Trustees members to your concerns, customer service from parks and recreation staff, and fire services provided to the Township by the City of Mount Pleasant.
- Road improvement stands out as a high priority for the use of tax dollars, as it is the only initiative of the nine presented that receives a high priority endorsement by more than one half of the print sample. At least 45 percent of print respondents view recycling for apartment and electric vehicle recharging stations as low priority.
- Almost one half of print respondents want pandemic relief funds spent on Township infrastructure, with the remainder split between endorsing spending of these funds on recreation or general Township services.
- More than one half of the print sample definitely supports protecting the residential quality of existing neighborhoods and protecting existing farmland in the Township. About one half or more of these respondents is probably or definitely opposed to using farmland for large-scale solar energy production or to develop more multi-family housing in the Township.
- Less than one quarter of the print sample reports having a good deal of knowledge about accessing services in the Township, and almost three quarters has little to no knowledge about the Township Master Plan for land use.

- When asked how they would prefer to receive information about parks and recreation services and facilities in the Township, at least one third endorse a print or email Township newsletter, the Township website, or social media.
- Twenty-five percent of print respondents rate the quality of life in the Township as excellent with only 13 rating it as fair or poor. While 22 percent of respondents have no opinion about changes in the quality of life in the Township over the last 10 years, 35 percent of the print sample rate these changes as fair or poor.
- Almost three quarters of the print sample indicate that there are sufficient parks and green space areas near their residence. While about one third of print respondents report never visiting Township parks in the last year, 14 percent visit them at least a few times a month. When asked why they do not visit Township parks more, 44 percent indicate that they are too busy or not interested. About one in five print respondents indicate that their age or disability keeps them from visiting the parks more, and about one in four respondents indicate that the parks don't have the features/amenities they want or the equipment/facilities they need.
- Two thirds of print sample respondents who do visit Township parks were most likely to visit McDonald Park. Respondents who use Township parks rate them positively. Almost 80 percent give the overall condition of the parks a rating of 4 or 5 (of 5). Similar numbers give these high ratings when asked about their overall level of satisfaction with McDonald Park. About two thirds of respondents give such high ratings to Jameson Park.
- Print respondents were asked about the park they most frequently visited outside of the Township. More than one third of the 331 print respondents who answered the question mentioned Island Park either as a single entry or as one of many they visit. Two factors stand out as reasons for liking these parks—the trails (mentioned by 162 of those responding) and special features of the parks (mentioned by 99 of them).
- Respondents were asked about their preferences for additional recreation opportunities for different ages of people. Responses were diverse, with 41 percent indicating that teens need more opportunities and 38 percent reporting that seniors need more recreation options.
- The largest number of print respondents (43 percent) answered “no new park land is needed” when asked for their preferences about new public park land, with 30 percent indicating that they would like additional land along the Chippewa River.
- More than 40 percent of the print sample indicate that there should be a focus on maintaining existing park facilities when they were queried about their priorities for improvements or new recreational amenities in Township parks. Three improvements are endorsed by at least 20 percent of the print sample—expand the network of paved pathways, add a lighted outdoor running/walking loop course in McDonald Park, and trailhead parking for pathway to Shepherd.

- More than 40 percent of print respondents expressed a preference for paved walking and biking paths when presented with a list of 22 new possible public facilities, amenities or services in the Township. Twenty percent of the print sample also endorsed unpaved hiking/cross-country ski trails and a nature preserve.
- Almost three quarters of print respondents indicated that no additional accommodations were needed to better serve those with disabilities.
- Respondents were asked two open-ended questions about issues in the Township—about the most important issue facing the Township and other comments. Many print respondents expressed concerns about the infrastructure—roads, sidewalks and bike paths, and the water and sewer system. Several respondents voiced concerns about aspects of the taxation system or the Township administration, while others focused on community issues (including issues related to safety). Several respondents also used these final spaces to voice their opinions about development and economic issues, with a few wanting to see more development and a few wanting the Township to maintain its current characteristics.
- For the most part, the opinions of the online sample dovetailed with those of the print sample.
- Some notable differences between the two samples (although no tests of statistical significance were performed) are that online survey respondents are more likely to say “don’t know” when asked about Township services; about 30 percent of them, however give D (fair) or E (poor) ratings to water and sewer services. They are also more likely to give high priority ratings to snow plowing of sidewalks and recycling for apartments and to definitely support developing more multi-family housing in the Township and the use of farmland for large-scale solar energy production. More than half of online respondents prefer receiving information about parks and recreation services and facilities through social media.
- More than one half of online respondents did not use Township parks in the last 12 months, with one third reporting that they do not know where the parks are located. Sixty percent who do use the parks report visiting Jameson Park. Online sample respondents are more likely than the print sample respondents to express support for small neighborhood parks and an additional park on the south side of the Township.

## **Appendix A: Survey Instrument**

The first questions ask you to rate the quality of various services that Union Township households receive. Please think of the grading system that the schools use – where A is excellent, B is good, C is adequate, D is fair, and E is poor. (check one response for each row)

Rate the quality of ...	A	B	C	D	E	Do not use/ Don't know
Fire services provided to the Township by the City of Mount Pleasant	<input type="radio"/>					
Union Township's water and sewer services	<input type="radio"/>					
Curbside recycling	<input type="radio"/>					
Responsiveness of Board of Trustees members to your concerns	<input type="radio"/>					
Police services provided to the Township by the Isabella County Sheriff's department	<input type="radio"/>					
Customer service from Township Hall staff	<input type="radio"/>					
Customer service from water and sewer utilities staff	<input type="radio"/>					
Customer service from parks and recreation staff	<input type="radio"/>					
The zoning and building permit application process	<input type="radio"/>					
The rental inspection process	<input type="radio"/>					
Overall government services provided by Union Township	<input type="radio"/>					

Union Township relies on taxes to pay for a variety of services. Because resources are limited, the Township wants to know about the priorities of residents. Please indicate whether you think each initiative should be a high, medium, or low priority for use of tax dollars. (check one response for each row)

Indicate the priority for tax dollar use ...	HIGH PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	LOW PRIORITY
More sidewalks and pathways in the Township	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improving roads in the Township	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhanced public safety services in the Township	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Township ordinance enforcement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved street lighting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snowplowing of sidewalks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recycling for apartments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Electric vehicle charging stations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reducing property blight (messiness) in the Township	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**People have different opinions about development and land use in Union Township. Please indicate whether you definitely support, probably support, probably oppose, or definitely oppose each of following. (check one response for each row)**

Level of support for ...	DEFINITELY SUPPORT	PROBABLY SUPPORT	PROBABLY OPPOSE	DEFINITELY OPPOSE	Don't know
Protecting existing farmland in the Township	<input type="radio"/>				
Growth in industrial development in the Township	<input type="radio"/>				
Developing more multi-family housing in the Township	<input type="radio"/>				
Developing more single family housing in the Township	<input type="radio"/>				
Protecting the residential quality of existing neighborhoods	<input type="radio"/>				
Acquiring land to expand opportunities for advanced manufacturing and clean technology businesses	<input type="radio"/>				
Use of farmland for large-scale solar energy production	<input type="radio"/>				

**Residents differ in terms of how much information they have about the Township. Please indicate how much knowledge you have about each of the following. (check one response for each row)**

Level of knowledge about ...	GOOD DEAL OF KNOWLEDGE	SOME KNOWLEDGE	LITTLE TO NO KNOWLEDGE
Accessing services in the Township (who to call; where to find information)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Township Master Plan for land use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**The next questions ask about the quality of life in the Township. (check one response for each row)**

Quality of life ...	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	No Opinion
How would you describe your quality of life living in Union Township today?	<input type="radio"/>				
How would you rate the changes that have taken place in the quality of life in Union Township over the past 10 years?	<input type="radio"/>				

**Do you feel that there are sufficient parks and green space areas near your residence? (please check one)**

- YES
  NOT SURE  
 NO

**Approximately how often did you or members of your household visit Township parks — McDonald Park or Jameson Park — during the past 12 months? (please check one)**

- At least once a week
  A few times during the year  
 A few times per month
  Never  
 About once per month

**What are the reasons that you or members of your household have not used the Township’s McDonald Park or Jameson Park facilities more often in the last year? (please check ALL THAT APPLY)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> We are too busy or not interested        | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of recreation programming            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inconvenient locations                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't have equipment or facilities I need |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know where the parks are located | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't have features or amenities I want   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Need transportation to get to parks      | <input type="checkbox"/> My disability or age                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities are not well maintained       | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not like the natural features (beauty) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't feel safe at parks                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                              |

**IF YOU NEVER VISITED TOWNSHIP PARKS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, SKIP TO THE TOP OF PAGE 4**

**Which Union Township park have you or members of your household visited most often during the past several years? (please check one)**

- MCDONALD PARK
  JAMESON PARK

**On a scale of 1 to 5, with “5” as the top rating, how would you rate the overall condition of any Township parks you have visited?**

**On a scale of 1 to 5, with “5” as the top rating, how would you rate your overall level of satisfaction with MCDONALD PARK facilities?**

**On a scale of 1 to 5, with “5” as the top rating, how would you rate your overall level of satisfaction with JAMESON PARK facilities?**

**Which of these populations in our community do you feel need additional recreation opportunities?** *[please check up to three (3) of the choices to show your highest priorities]*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toddlers (0-3 years of age)         | <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Younger children (4-8 years of age) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other adults              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth (9-13 years of age)           | <input type="checkbox"/> Persons with disabilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teens (14-19 years of age)          | <input type="checkbox"/> NONE OF THESE POPULATIONS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Young adults                        |  |

**What type of NEW public park land is most needed in the Township?** *[please check no more than two (2)]*

- Additional land along the Chippewa River
- New park on the south side of the Township
- New park on the east side of the Township
- NO NEW PARK LAND IS NEEDED
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Which of the following improvements to an existing park or new recreational amenity in the Township – IF ANY – do you feel are your highest priorities?** *[please check no more than three(3)]*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NONE   | <input type="checkbox"/> Develop more sport fields                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Add a covered pavilion next to the McDonald Park playground        | <input type="checkbox"/> Expand network of paved pathways                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Add a lighted outdoor running/walking loop course at McDonald Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Trailhead parking for pathway to Shepherd         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Add a park with amenities for families with small children         | <input type="checkbox"/> Focus on maintaining the existing park facilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mountain biking trail  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                                      |

**What types of accommodations are needed to better serve you or household members with disabilities?** *(please check ALL THAT APPLY)*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NONE                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Sign language interpreter for the deaf |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptive equipment               | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-visual assistance (Braille)        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barrier-free access improvements | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                           |

**What parks or recreation facilities (public, private, commercial) OTHER THAN THOSE in the Township do you visit?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why do you visit them?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Which of the following new public recreation facilities, amenities, or services — IF ANY— do you feel are most needed in the Township?** *[please check up to five (5) to show your highest priorities or “none are needed”]*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NONE ARE NEEDED                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor amphitheater                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athletic courts, multi-sport                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Paved walking and biking paths          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athletic fields - baseball or softball       | <input type="checkbox"/> Pickleball courts                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athletic fields - lacrosse, football, soccer | <input type="checkbox"/> Playgrounds                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bird watching/wildlife observation           | <input type="checkbox"/> Public wireless Internet access         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BMX/freestyle biking course                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Skateboarding facilities                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Climbing wall                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Sledding hill                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Covered group picnic shelters                | <input type="checkbox"/> Small neighborhood parks                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disc golf course                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Splash pad/spray park                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ice rink                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology charging stations            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature preserve                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Unpaved hiking/cross-country ski trails |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                                 |  |

**Union Township has received \$1.4 million from federal pandemic relief funds (ARPA) to spend on one-time projects. In your opinion, which of the following should be the highest priority for the Township in making use of these funds?** *(check one response)*

- GENERAL TOWNSHIP SERVICES
- TOWNSHIP INFRASTRUCTURE
- RECREATION

**These last questions focus on your household. This information is used for summary purposes only.**

	YEARS
How many years have you lived in Isabella County, including your years in Union Township?	_____
How many years have you lived in Union Township altogether?	_____
How old are you?	_____

**Please write in the TOTAL number of people in your household in the box and THEN the total in each age group living in your household:**

TOTAL NUMBER IN HOUSEHOLD

\_\_\_\_\_ 17 & under    \_\_\_\_\_ 18-34    \_\_\_\_\_ 35-54    \_\_\_\_\_ 55-74    \_\_\_\_\_ 75+



**How would members of your household prefer to receive information about the Township’s parks and recreation facilities and services?** *(please check ALL THAT APPLY)*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Township’s website                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Public access television  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Morning Sun newspaper                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Social media              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information displayed at parks            | <input type="checkbox"/> Township print newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attending meetings (in person or virtual) | <input type="checkbox"/> Township email newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radio                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____              |

**Which of the following best describes where your residence is located?** *(check one response)*

- HIGH DENSITY APARTMENT OR CONDO COMPLEX
- SUBDIVISION/NEIGHBORHOOD
- RURAL/AGRICULTURAL
- OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

**Which of the following describes your race or ethnicity?** *(check AS MANY AS APPLY)*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> AFRICAN AMERICAN | <input type="checkbox"/> NATIVE AMERICAN/AMERICAN INDIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ASIAN            | <input type="checkbox"/> WHITE                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HISPANIC         | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____                    |

**Please check the category that best describes your yearly household income.** *(check one response)*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Less than \$25,000      | <input type="radio"/> \$75,000 up to \$100,000  |
| <input type="radio"/> \$25,000 up to \$50,000 | <input type="radio"/> \$100,000 up to \$150,000 |
| <input type="radio"/> \$50,000 up to \$75,000 | <input type="radio"/> More than \$150,000       |

**What do you believe is the MOST IMPORTANT issue to address for the future of the Township?**

---



---



---

**Please add any additional comments about the Township’s services and facilities.**

---



---



---

**Thank you for your time.**

Please return your completed survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.