

# Union Township Residents' Views of Community Issues

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Mary S. Senter  
Central Michigan University

# Methodology- Print Survey

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- On October 30, 2023, a survey packet was mailed to 2,006 property owners.
- Approximately one week later, a post card was mailed to these addresses.
- On November 20, approximately two weeks after the postcard mailing, a second survey packet was mailed to non-respondents.
- Field phase ended Tuesday, January 2, 2024.
- Completed print surveys were returned through U.S. mail from 638 respondents.
- Response rate = 32.7% (subtracting 52 bad addresses from total of 2,006)

# Methodology- Online Survey

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- On November 9 and November 10, 2023, 5,700 fliers were delivered by CMU to the U.S. Post Office.
- In the next several days, fliers with QR codes and the URL to the survey were distributed to mailboxes in Union Township via the Every Door Delivery Method (EDDM) of the U.S. Post Office
- Only 89 respondents completed surveys by December 15, 2023.
- This cannot be considered a scientific sample given the low response rate.

# Years in Township and County: Percents

|                                | 0-5 years | 6-10 years | 11-15 years | 16-20 years | 21-30 years | 31 or more years |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| Years lived in Isabella County | 11.5      | 7.2        | 5.9         | 6.3         | 16.0        | 53.1             |
| Years lived in the Township    | 20.0      | 12.6       | 7.1         | 10.1        | 19.4        | 30.8             |

# Location of Residence: Percents

|                          | <b>High density<br/>apartment<br/>or condo<br/>complex</b> | <b>Subdivision/<br/>neighborhood</b> | <b>Rural/<br/>agricultural</b> | <b>Other</b> |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Location of<br>residence | 6.3  | 58.2                                 | 32.5                           | 2.9          |

# Demographics Characteristics: Percents

|     | 18-25<br>Years Old | 26-35<br>Years Old | 36-45<br>Years Old | 46-55<br>Years Old | 56-65<br>Years Old | 66-75<br>Years Old | 76+ Years<br>Old |
|-----|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Age | 1.1                | 4.4                | 14.0               | 14.9               | 21.7               | 25.4               | 18.5             |

|                     | Less than<br>\$25,000 | \$25,000 up<br>to \$50,000 | \$50,000 up<br>to \$75,000 | \$75,000 up<br>to \$100,000 | \$100,000 up<br>to \$150,000 | More than<br>\$150,000 |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Household<br>Income | 5.1                   | 17.1                       | 19.1                       | 20.2                        | 19.9                         | 18.6                   |

# Household Composition: Percents

|                    | 0-17 Yrs<br>Old | 18-34 Yrs<br>Old | 35-54 Yrs<br>Old | 55-74 Yrs<br>Old | 75+ Yrs<br>Old |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| One or More Person | 23.3            | 17.6             | 31.7             | 53.6             | 23.5           |

# Ratings of Township Services

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- Percentages including Don't Know/Do not use responses
- Percentages excluding Don't Know/Do not use responses

| Ratings of Union Township Services—Percentages                                       | A (Excellent) | Don't Know/Don't Use |
|--|---------------|----------------------|
| Customer service from Township Hall staff  | 32.1          | 18.3                 |
| Curbside recycling   | 28.5          | 22.9                 |
| Police services provided to the Township by the Isabella County Sheriff's department | 26.3          | 32.5                 |
| Fire services provided to the Township by the City of Mount Pleasant                 | 25.7          | 52.9                 |
| Union Township's water and sewer services  | 17.6          | 28.4                 |
| Customer service from parks and recreation staff                                     | 16.2          | 58.2                 |
| Customer service from water and sewer utilities staff                                | 15.4          | 47.3                 |
| Overall government services provided by Union Township                               | 13.2          | 16.2                 |
| The zoning and building permit application process                                   | 6.1           | 56.6                 |
| Responsiveness of Board of Trustees members to your concerns                         | 3.7           | 65.3                 |
| The rental inspection process  | 2.6           | 82.1                 |

| Ratings of Township Service (excluding DK)—Percentages                                       | A (Excellent) | D (Fair) | E (Poor) |
|--|---------------|----------|----------|
| Fire services provided to the Township by the City of Mount Pleasant (N=295)                 | 54.6          | 3.1      | 0.7      |
| Customer Service from Township Hall staff (N=512)  | 39.3          | 6.6      | 4.9      |
| Police services provided to the Township by the Isabella County Sheriff's department (N=423) | 39.0          | 3.8      | 1.9      |
| Customer service from parks and recreation staff (N=261)                                     | 38.7          | 3.1      | 2.7      |
| Curbside Recycling (N=482)   | 36.9          | 7.1      | 4.6      |
| Customer service from water and sewer utilities staff (N=329)                                | 29.2          | 6.7      | 10.9     |
| Union Township's water and sewer services (N=447)  | 24.6          | 11.4     | 9.8      |
| Overall government services provided by Union Township (N=521)                               | 15.7          | 8.1      | 5.4      |
| The rental inspection process (N=111)  | 14.4          | 12.6     | 17.1     |
| The zoning and building permit application process (N=271)                                   | 14.0          | 8.9      | 20.7     |
| Responsiveness of Board of Trustees members to your concerns (N=216)                         | 10.6          | 16.2     | 17.1     |

# Priorities for Use of Tax Dollars: Percents

|   | High Priority | Medium Priority | Low Priority |
|---|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Improving roads in the Township                 | 61.9          | 34.0            | 4.2          |
| Reducing property blight 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         |

# Support for Development and Land Use: Percents

|   | Definitely Support | Probably Support | Probably Oppose | Definitely Oppose | Don't know |
|---|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------|
| 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   | 22.4               | 56.2             | 10.4            | 3.8               | 7.2        |
| Growth in industrial development  | 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 Township   | 5.9                | 25.2             | 34.0            | 25.7              | 9.3        |

# Amount of Knowledge about the Township: Percents

|                                       | Good deal | Some | Little to No |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------|--------------|
| Accessing services in the township    | 22.8      | 57.0 | 20.2         |
| The Township Master Plan for land use | 6.5       | 21.0 | 72.5         |

# Preferred Method for Receiving Information

|   | Percents |
|---|----------|
| 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      |

# Sufficient Parks and Green Space Areas Near Residence and Frequency of Use

|  | Percent |
|--|---------|
| YES: Sufficient Parks and Green Space Areas Near Residence     | 72.1    |
| Frequency of Visiting Township Parks During the Past 12 Months |         |
| At least a few times a month                                   | 14.0    |
| About 1x per month to a few times per year                     | 52.1    |
| Never  | 33.9    |

# Reasons Household Members Have Not Visited Township Parks

|   | Percent |
|---|---------|
| 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    |
| Other                                   | 21.5    |

# Most Frequently Visited Union Township Park

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|               | Percent |
|---------------|---------|
| McDonald Park | 67.4    |
| Jameson Park  | 27.7    |
| Both Parks    | 4.9     |

# Most Frequently Visited Park Outside of Union Township

|                                     | Percent |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| 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    |

# Why Residents Prefer Other Parks Outside Union Township

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|  | Number |
|--|--------|
| Trails (walking, biking, skiing, etc.) | 149    |
| Special Features                       | 99     |
| Other comments                         | 55     |

# Overall Satisfaction with the Condition of Township Parks: Percents

|  | 1 or 2 | 3    | 4    | 5 (Top) |
|--|--------|------|------|---------|
| How would you rate the overall condition of any Township parks you have visited?     | 5.0    | 17.0 | 46.5 | 31.6    |
| How would you rate your overall level of satisfaction with McDonald Park facilities? | 5.2    | 15.5 | 43.9 | 35.5    |
| How would you rate your overall level of satisfaction with Jameson Park facilities?  | 11.0   | 21.5 | 43.1 | 24.4    |

# Preference for New Public Park Land

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|  | Percent |
|--|---------|
| 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    |
| <b>NO NEW PARK LAND IS NEEDED</b>          | 42.6    |
| Other                                      | 11.4    |

# Priorities for Improvements or Recreational Amenities in Township Parks

| Improvements   | Percent |
|--|---------|
| 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    |

# Priorities of New Public Facilities, Amenities, or Services in the Township

| Priorities                                | Percent |
|---|---------|
| Paved walking and biking paths            | 44.1    |
| Unpaved hiking / cross-country ski trails | 20.2    |
| Nature preserve                           | 19.6    |

# Quality of Life/Views of Growth: Percents

|  | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | No opinion |
|--|-----------|------|------|------|------------|
| Quality of life living in Union Township                             | 25.0      | 60.5 | 11.5 | 1.6  | 1.4        |
| Growth that has taken place in Union Township over the past 10 years | 6.0       | 37.7 | 26.4 | 8.4  | 21.5       |

# Most Important Issue to Address

| Code Category            | Number |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Infrastructure           | 12     |
| Sidewalks and Bike Paths | 47     |
| Roads                    | 59     |
| Water and Sewer          | 51     |
| Administration           | 31     |
| Board of Trustees        | 3      |
| Taxes                    | 41     |

# Most Important Issue to Address, Cont.

| Code Category             | Number |
|---------------------------|--------|
| Community                 |        |
| Housing                   | 9      |
| Safety                    | 58     |
| Quality and Enhancement   | 10     |
| Recreation and Activities | 23     |
| Sustainability            | 14     |

# Most Important Issue to Address, Cont.

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|                             | Number |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Development/Economic Issues |        |
| Stay Rural/No Changes       | 32     |
| More Development            | 25     |
| Zoning and Regulations      | 28     |
| Services                    | 31     |
| Miscellaneous               | 21     |

# Online sample

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- Younger, lived in the Township for fewer years, more likely to live in high density apartments/condo complexes, lower income
- Many experiences and opinions are similar, although more likely to report “don’t know.”
- Noted differences regarding preference for social media and low ratings for water and sewer services, high priority for snowplowing of sidewalks and recycling for apartments, definite support for multi-family housing and use of farmland for solar energy development.
- Less likely to use Township parks, more likely to not know where they are located; more likely to use Jameson Park, more likely to support small neighborhood parks and a park on the south side of the Township.

Thank you for your support!

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- And, thank you to residents who returned ALL those questionnaires!