

**ONEIDA CHARTER TOWNSHIP JOINT MEETINGS OF PLANNING COMMISSION  
AND TOWNSHIP BOARD MINUTES HELD JANUARY 13, 2020**

**AT 7:00 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT: CHAIRMAN KILGORE MEMBERS STAHELIN, KUHLMAN, SCHERER, GREEN,  
SCHROEDER, WALTERS AND ZONING ADMINISTRATOR GOSCHKA.**

**TOWNSHIP BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: CLERK KILGORE, TRUSTEES LAWRY, CAMPBELL AND SCHULTZ  
REPRESENTATIVE MR. PIGGOTT OF THE ROWE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMPANY AND RESIDENTS  
OF THE TOWNSHIP.**

1. Call to Order by Chairman Kilgore at 7:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance was given.
3. Additions to the Agenda, there were none.
4. Minutes of October 28, 2019 were approved as presented in a Motion made by Mrs. Scherer and supported by Mr. Kuhlman. Motion Carried.
5. Public Comment: There was none.
6. Appointment of Planning Commission Officers: Chair and Vice Chair. Motion was made by Mr. Green to keep the present Chair Kilgore and Vice Chair Scherer. Support was given by Mrs. Schroeder. Motion Carried.
7. Mr. Piggott of Rowe Professional Services Company presented on Master Plan Data collected from community workshop, survey data and the rest of the community description data. Review of previous plans, goals and policies.

Mr. Piggott provided handouts for the Board on the items to be discussed at the Meeting and a copy of these are attached to these Minutes. He said there were 4 things he wanted to discuss and go over with the Board tonight.

1. Existing Land Use Inventory
2. Community Survey
3. Goals, objectives and strategies
4. The Master Plan Open House.

He first discussed the Existing Land Use Inventory and said that some of the changes were due to interpretation. He discussed each category listed and the percentage of change. He noted that there were no dramatic changes.

He then discussed the Community Survey Report. His chart which is attached showed the changes in the 10% or more response area and the 4 to 5% response area. It was noted that there were 703 responses in 2002 and 348 in 2019. Ms. Lawry wondered why the difference in the number of residents who responded. Mr. Piggott said it could be due to some development activity that was happening in the Township in 2002. Mrs. Schultz said it could have been affected by some large annexations of land from the Township to the City.

Mr. Piggott pointed out that there was not quite as much concern over the growth of Grand Ledge and the loss of rural character in 2019 as there was in 2002.

He further discussed the areas in the community that had dropped such as ground water concerns, roads and loss of farmland. Mr. Walters felt that this was due to the Township following the Master Plan and protecting the farmland, with the development of the Solar Ordinance and Wind Ordinance.

Chairman Kilgore was concerned with the response of only 10% of the Township. Mr. Piggott felt that if people were satisfied and not worried there was less response. Mr. Kuhlman was not sure he agreed with that. Mr. Piggott said there were different avenues that could be used for the public to be involved. Like the Open House.

Mr. Piggott discussed issues important to the Township in the next ten years. Affordable housing did not seem to be a problem, but road maintenance, bike paths and parks seemed to be important to Residents. Also, reasonable restrictions on growth.

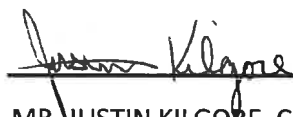
Mr. Piggott touched briefly on the Prouds and Sorries. Then moved on to Community Goals and Objectives and Strategies. These can be found on page 1 of that Section. He discussed low density development, cluster housing, preservation of natural areas and prime farmland, and how the Zoning Ordinance would be used to enable the Master Plan through adoption of strategies such as amending the Zoning Ordinance to establish natural feature buffers and striving to protect prime farmland and large lot development for cluster housing which would also preserve farmland. He also discussed preservation of natural features.

Mr. Piggott asked if the Commission would like to stop at this point and take time to review the Goals, Objectives and Strategies. He apologized for not getting the material to the Boards sooner. The Commission agreed that they would. So, another meeting will be scheduled for February. Zoning Administrator Goschka will set a date and notify the Commission and the Township Board. After that meeting the open house will be scheduled, and the Commission will decide date, time and location, and how it will be publicized. Mr. Piggott discussed having Commission and Board Members hand out cards to friends and neighbors for the Open House. He said this has proven very successful.

8. Public Comment: Ms. Lawry handed out pamphlets on The Capital Area Opioid & Pain Conference.
9. Any Other Business: There was discussion on the Benton Township Solar Project and Zoning.
10. Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jan Schultz and Melissa Goschka.

APPROVED:



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MR. JUSTIN KILGORE, CHAIRMAN

## LAND USE INVENTORY

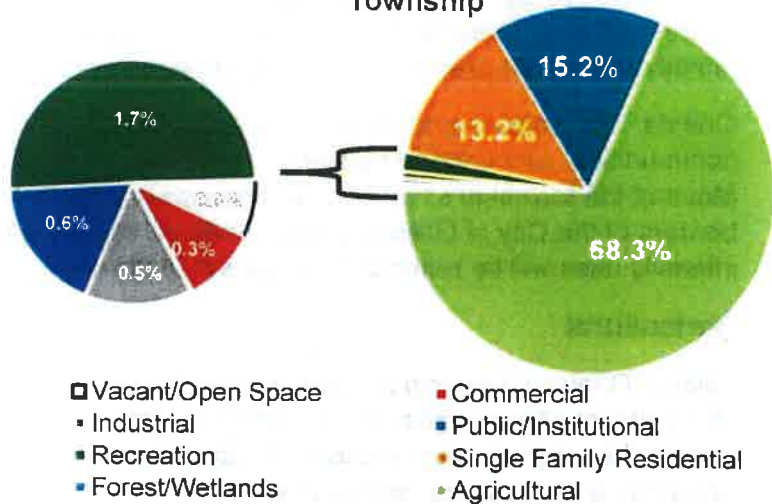
Land use and natural features information are essential components for the purpose and development of a Master Plan. Existing land use and land cover data were mapped using tax parcel data provided by Eaton County, then developed through analysis of both the existing land use data provided by Tri-County Regional Planning Commission in 2002 and recent aerial imagery.

Oneida Township's existing land use is divided into eight different categories, the same as the previous Master Plan in 2002: Agricultural, Forests/Wetlands, Single Family Residential, Recreation, Public/Institutional, Industrial, Commercial, and Vacant/Open Space

When Oneida Township's existing land use is broken down to its classification and acreage, rural uses

are shown to be the dominant use of the land. This is evidently seen in the land use breakdown chart. Agricultural activities are the township's primary land use, accounting for 68.3 percent of the total land (13,967.75 acres).

Breakdown of Existing Land Usage in Oneida Township



| EXISTING LAND USE         | LAND AREA OF USE (ACRES) - 2019 | % OF TOTAL LAND - 2019 | LAND AREA OF USE (ACRES) - 2002 | % OF TOTAL LAND - 2002 | % CHANGE      |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Agricultural              | 13,967.75                       | 68.3%                  | 14,109                          | 68%                    | -1.0%         |
| Forest/Wetlands           | 3,105.36                        | 15.2%                  | 3,002                           | 14%                    | 3.4%          |
| Single Family Residential | 2,681.11                        | 13.2%                  | 2,503                           | 12%                    | 7.1%          |
| Recreation                | 357.69                          | 1.7%                   | 364.5                           | 2%                     | -1.9%         |
| Public/Institutional      | 122.51*                         | 0.6%                   | 27.51*                          | 0.1%                   | 345.3%        |
| Industrial                | 98.76                           | 0.5%                   | 208.43                          | 1%                     | -52.6%        |
| Commercial                | 68.37                           | 0.3%                   | 54.62*                          | 0.3%                   | 25.2%         |
| Vacant/Open Space         | 54.99                           | 0.3%                   | 617.32                          | 3%                     | -91.1%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>              | <b>20,456.54</b>                | <b>100%</b>            | <b>20,842.83</b>                | <b>100%</b>            | <b>-1.85%</b> |

\*Values are based on analytical comparison of 2019 and 2002 Existing Land Use maps and are approximated.

Following this is forests and wetlands, which comprise 15.2 percent of the land (3,105.36 acres). This is closely followed by single family residential uses, where land occupied by single family homes account for 13.2 percent of the total land (2,681.11

acres). The remaining 3.3 percent of land use includes recreation, public and institutional, industrial, and commercial and office uses, as well as vacant land and designated open space.

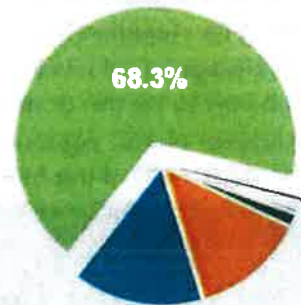
Compared to the township's 2002 Master Plan, there have been some changes in the distribution of land use. While agriculture remains unchanged, there has been a slight decrease in vacant/open space and industrial use and slight increase in forest/wetlands and single family residential uses. In 2002, vacant and open space was 3 percent of all land in the township, and industrial use occupied 1 percent, to forest/wetlands' 14 percent and single family residential's 12 percent. Total vacant land coverage has decreased by 2.7 percent and industrial by 0.5 percent, while forest/wetlands and single family residential uses have both increased by approximately 1 percent.

Oneida Township's land use patterns are characteristic of similar rural township communities, with gridded square mile section roads and majority agricultural land use. Much of the township's higher-intensity uses are found along the southern and eastern borders of the City of Grand Ledge. It can be expected that future development of high intensity uses will be related to the growth of the city.

### **Agricultural**

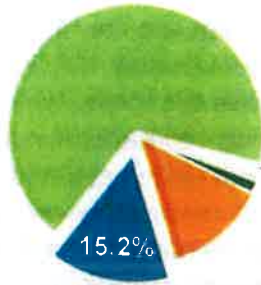
Most of Oneida Township's land use is agriculture. 68.3 percent of properties in this category were engaged in agricultural practices. In classifying property as agricultural, parcels that were predominantly agriculture but include the farmstead were classified as agricultural. If the farmstead was located on a separate, smaller parcel, that property was classified as residential. There are 13,967.75 acres of land for cultivation, livestock, and other agricultural activities spread across the entire township. It is less prevalent where development has occurred around Grand Ledge, but there is still some land being used for agriculture north and east of the city.

**Agricultural Land Use -  
68.3%**



## Forest/Wetlands

**Forest/Wetlands Land Use - 15.2%**



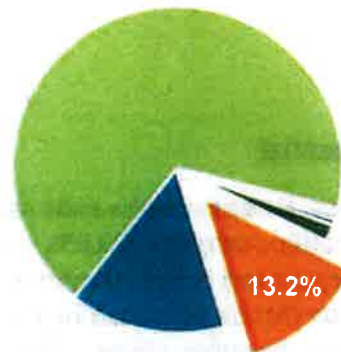
Forests and wetlands make up the second highest amount of land use in the township with 15.2 percent coverage; approximately 3,105 acres. Forests and wetlands vary in size, dimensions, and characteristics across the township. They can be simple fencerows in farm fields, or thickly wooded areas covering large amounts of land. Wetlands are often identified by proximity to bodies of water and streams, although consideration for development needs case-by-case site assessment as their official delineation is not determined in the

existing land use map.

## Single Family Residential

The third largest occupier of land in the township is single family residential, with 13.2 percent, approximately 2,681.11 acres, of the land being used. Denser, higher-intensity residential development can be found bordering the City of Grand Ledge, where public utilities such as municipal sewer and water lines are readily available. Larger lot developments can be found across the township, with clusters along St. Joe Highway and Hartel Road. Many single family homes outside of the Grand Ledge area typically sit on large lots, but do not cultivate the land. Alternatively, there are many farmsteads, and typically a small single family residential lot surrounded by agricultural land is one of these homes.

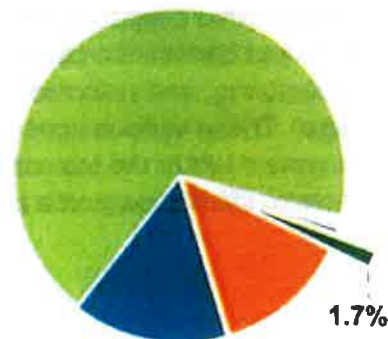
**Single Family Residential Land Use - 13.2%**



## Recreation

Recreation is the fourth largest land use in the township, with 1.7 percent, approximately 357.69 acres, of land being used. While part of the smaller 3.7% of land use in the township, it is the largest of those uses. It primarily consists of Lincoln Brick Park, two golf courses, and Coscarelli Park in the north-central and northeast portions of the township. Lincoln Brick Park is the township's public park, and provides various

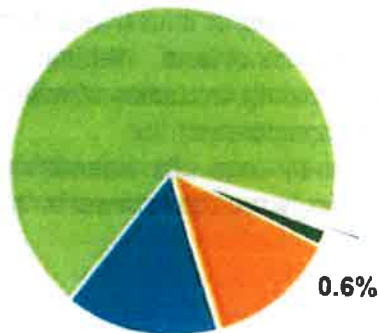
**Recreation Land Use - 1.7%**



recreational opportunities bolstered by its proximity to Grand Ledge and siting along the Grand River.

### Public and Institutional

**Public/Institutional Land Use - 0.6%**

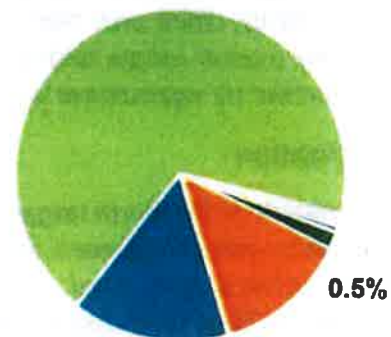


Public and institutional land uses are the fifth largest use, occupying 0.6%, or approximately 122.5 acres, of the township land. Public uses are those owned by any unit of government for non-recreational purposes, such as the Township Hall and utility easements. Institutional uses are publicly- or privately-owned non-recreational uses that serve the public benefit, such as schools, cemeteries, and places of worship. These land uses are distributed across the township, including a few schools to the south and around Grand Ledge, the Township Hall in the center of the township, a cemetery to the south, and an electrical substation on the south border of the township.

### Industrial

Industrial uses are the sixth largest use in the township, comprising 0.5%, approximately 99 acres, of land in the township. The primary reason for this is rooted in the need for ready access to public utilities. Because of this, most of the industrial sites in the township surround the City of Grand Ledge, with the exception of one company to the south and one to the west of the city. Industrial uses within the township include businesses that support agricultural operations, storage and distribution centers, light manufacturing, and automotive repair and storage. These various operations support local employment within the township, and provide economic influx to support a primarily agricultural economy.

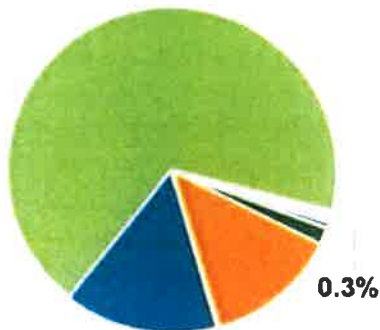
**Industrial Land Use - 0.5%**





## Commercial

**Commercial Land Use -  
0.3%**

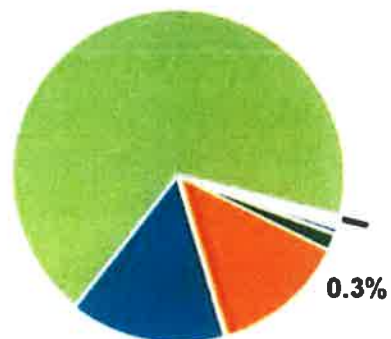


Commercial land uses are the seventh largest use in the township, with 0.3%, or approximately 68 acres, being used for this land use. This land use category includes retail and wholesale trade, services, and office uses. Commercial land uses are located almost entirely border the south side of the City of Grand Ledge, with a few more commercial establishments east of the city. Much of the commercial use is sited to benefit from municipal water and sewer services, as well as reliable vehicular access from Saginaw Highway.

## Vacant/Open Space

Vacant land and open space are the smallest occupation of the land in the township, with less than 0.3%, nearly 55 acres, of land left open either to provide open space or due to lack of development. This also includes buildings that are unoccupied or abandoned. The vacant land in the township is relatively sporadic, with some concentration south of the City of Grand Ledge, and individual lots in residential areas across the township. Vacant land has decreased by 91.1% since reported in the 2002 Master Plan, showing a trend to promote development or reclamation for wetland mitigation and forest planting.

**Vacant/Open Land Use -  
0.3%**







### Community Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Key: Public Engagement Support, Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) Program Suggestions, suggested by Board

| Agricultural/Open Space Preservation  |  |            |
|---|--|------------|
| Goals   | Objectives   | Strategies |
| Oneida Township will strive to protect and preserve its prime farmland and open space areas from the negative effects of development                                    | The Township will identify areas where existing farmland should/could be considered for future residential development and encourage the development of those areas first. These areas may be characterized by poor agricultural/low productivity soils, incompatibility with surrounding land uses, smaller parcel sizes (less than 40 acres) etc.      |            |
|   | The Township will encourage cluster/open space residential development on large tracts of land in order to preserve farmland and/or minimize the loss of open space.   |            |
|   | The Township will consider implementation of appropriate zoning techniques, such as Large Lot Zoning, Sliding Scale Zoning, Quarter/Quarter Zoning, TDR/PDR, etc (as outlined in Chapter 6), in order to protect its prime, productive farmland areas. <u>(Does the township want to do this?)</u>   |            |
|   | The Township will strive to support the desires of individual property owners who wish to keep their land in active agricultural production by minimizing the development of conflicting land uses, such as large residential developments near active farming areas.  |            |
|   | Through site plan review, the Township will encourage approaches to land development that effectively protect and preserve prime farmland and open space areas by considering such features as soil type, steep slopes, unique natural features, lot sizes, densities, and the surrounding character. <u>(Is this the same as the second objective?)</u> |            |
| Natural Features and the Environment  |  |            |
| Goals   | Objectives   | Strategies |
| Oneida Township will strive to protect and preserve environmental resources such as the river, streams, wetlands and woodlands from the negative effects of development | The Township will identify buffer areas for the protection of Oneida's significant natural features such as rivers, streams, wetlands and woodlands.   |            |
|   | Through zoning, site plan review, and education, the township will encourage approaches to land development that effectively integrate the protection and preservation of natural features such as topography, steep slopes, hydrology, air quality, unique views and vistas, landscaping and natural vegetation into the process of site design.        |            |
| Oneida Township will strive to protect the quantity and quality of its groundwater  | The Township should use appropriate ordinances to protect and preserve its natural features and determine other methods of maintaining and enhancing these features. <u>(Is this proposing separate ordinances for protecting natural features?)</u>   |            |
|   | The Township will provide mechanisms which will prevent existing and potential sources of contamination from reaching the public water supply well or well field.  |            |
|   | The Township will maintain the quantity of Oneida's ground water sources by carefully regulating capacity as new development occurs.   |            |
|   |  |            |
|   |  |            |

**Community Goals, Objectives, and Strategies**

**Key- Public Engagement Support, Redevelopment Ready Community (REC) Program Suggestions,**

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   | <p>Key- Public Engagement Support, Redevelopment Ready Community (REC) Program Suggestions,</p> <p>In those locations containing soils which are not conducive to on-site septic use and/or may result in the degradation of groundwater, the Township will <b>limit land uses, form development and site design</b> <del>limit the nature of the proposed project and potential ground water impact</del></p>   |   |
|   | <p>The Township will coordinate with county and state officials to develop improved standards regarding the suitability of soils for septic system placement and use</p> <p>Through site plan review, the township will discourage practices which would alter the natural, valuable function of wetlands, including those not protected under the State of Michigan Wetlands Protection Act (P.A. 203 of 1979 [now Part 303 of Act 451, as amended]).</p>   | <p>Evaluation of low impact design is conducted</p> |
| <b>Residential Growth and Development</b>           | <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <p>The Township will determine optimal locations for future single-family residential development giving special consideration to agricultural preservation, environmental protection, open space preservation, infrastructure availability and the surrounding land use character.</p> <p>The Township will encourage development patterns through smaller lot, open space developments and conservation easements that preserve large tracts of active agricultural land and/or incorporate open space, natural features or other similar amenities (as outlined in Chapter 6). [Is this a duplicate of previous objectives]</p> <p>The Township will limit higher density residential development to locations where public utilities exist; or where</p> <p>a) Public utilities do not exist but, as a component of a proposed development, will be extended to serve that development; and</p> <p>b) There is access to a major thoroughfare (improved roadway); and</p> <p>c) The development is compatible with surrounding land uses.</p> <p>The Township will encourage development that is of a scale and size that does not exceed or adversely impact existing or immediately planned infrastructure.</p> <p>The Township will coordinate with the City of Grand Ledge on zoning and development decisions for new residential projects. Specifically, consideration should be given to cooperating on land use decisions that affect properties on or near the community boundaries through a joint-site plan review and approval process.</p> | <p><b>Strategies</b></p>                            |
| <b>Commercial/Industrial Growth and Development</b> | <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <p>The Township will limit commercial and industrial development to parcels of appropriate size and scale, and in appropriate locations to maintain consistency with the surrounding land use character.</p> <p>The Township will limit commercial/industrial development to locations where:</p> <p>public utilities exist; and where</p>  | <p><b>Strategies</b></p>                            |
| <b>Goals</b>  | <p>Oneida Township will allow commercial and industrial uses of appropriate type and scale to develop in appropriate locations</p>   |   |

## Community Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Key: Public Engagement Support, Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) Program Suggestions

|  |  |                          |
|--|--|--------------------------|
|  | <p>a) Public utilities do not exist but, as a component of a proposed development, will be extended to serve that development; and</p> <p>b) There is access to a major thoroughfare (improved roadway); and</p> <p>c) The development is compatible with surrounding land uses.</p> <p>The Township will coordinate with the City of Grand Ledge on zoning and development decisions for commercial and industrial projects. Specifically, consideration should be given to cooperating on land use decisions that affect properties on or near the community boundaries through a joint-site plan review and approval process.</p> <p>The Township will work to develop access management regulations to promote safe and efficient use of streets and pedestrian walks.</p> |                          |
| <b>Community Facilities and Services</b>   |  |                          |
| <p><b>Goals</b></p> <p>Onida Township will provide the necessary public facilities and services that will serve the needs of its residents while preserving the township's rural character</p>   | <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <p>The Township will promote a coordinated approach with developers, the City of Grand Ledge and other adjacent communities for the planning, provision, and expansion of public water and sanitary systems.</p> <p>The Township will promote safety along streets through the provision of property located pedestrian areas (sidewalks and/or bikepaths) and will require these features in all new major developments.</p> <p>The Township will continue to update and implement its 1993-2010 Wastewater Collection System Master Plan</p> <p>Support the design of a new road to be addressed</p> <p>Lack of parks</p> <p>Street improvements</p>  | <p><b>Strategies</b></p> |
| <b>Next Action</b>   |  |                          |
| <b>Goals</b>   | <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <p>Those individuals given the responsibility for planning and zoning review and approval have the necessary training and on-going education to perform their assignments</p> <p>The public has access to information regarding on-going planning and zoning studies and reviews</p> <p>The planning and zoning review process is continually monitored for improvements</p> <p>Planning and zoning review procedures are reviewed to address unnecessary delays</p>  | <b>Strategies</b>        |
| <p>The planning and zoning process is transparent to the public and clear and concise for the applicant</p> <p>R:\Projects\120031A\Docs\Master Plan\Plan On-Motion and Objectives\ExhibitA Goals and Objectives\Community Goals.docx</p> |  |                          |



## Community Survey and Public Input

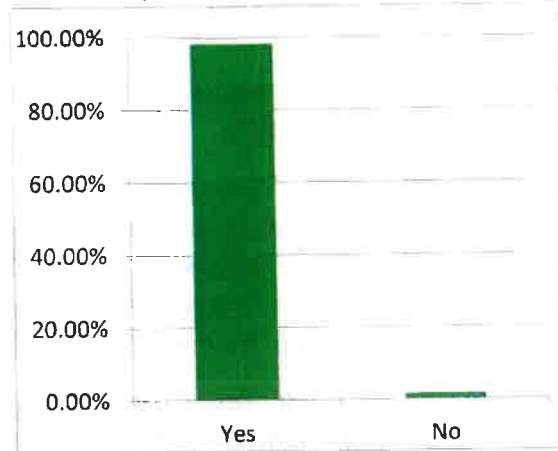
### Survey Response Characteristics

The 348 respondents were asked about their connections to Oneida Township as residents. Of the respondents, 98.27% live in the township, while 1.73% live outside of it.

We then asked those who live within the township how long they have lived there. Nearly 49% of respondents have lived within Oneida Township for more than 25 years.

| Years Residents Have Lived in the Township |        |     |
|--|--------|-----|
| Years                                      | %      | #   |
| Less than a year                           | 3.78%  | 13  |
| 1 to 5 years                               | 11.34% | 39  |
| 6 to 10 years                              | 6.69%  | 23  |
| 11 to 15 years                             | 6.69%  | 23  |
| 16 to 20 years                             | 12.21% | 42  |
| 21 to 25 years                             | 10.76% | 37  |
| More than 25 years                         | 48.55% | 167 |

### Residency of Oneida Township



Next, we asked the age range of the different respondents, and found that a majority (51.45%) are senior adults older than 65. 15.41% of the respondents were between the ages of 60-64, and 20.64% of respondents were between the ages of 45 and 59. There were only two responses from individuals under the age of 24.

| Age Group for Residents in the Township |        |     |
|---|--------|-----|
| Age Group                               | %      | #   |
| 24 or under                             | 0.58%  | 2   |
| 25 to 44                                | 11.92% | 41  |
| 45 to 59                                | 20.64% | 71  |
| 60 to 64                                | 15.41% | 53  |
| 65 and older                            | 51.45% | 177 |

### Quality of Life

To understand public perceptions regarding the quality of life within the township, we gave eight different statements that would describe how residents feel about living here. The 348 respondents were asked to rank how strongly they agreed or disagreed with certain statements about the township. The first statement was, "I am proud to say I live in Oneida Township." With this statement, 46.43 percent strongly agreed and 23.74 percent agreed. This is indicative of a strong tie to the township with respect to sense of place and advantages presented by living here.

The second statement was, "More homes and businesses will cause Oneida Township to lose its rural character." To this statement, 29.57 percent strongly agreed, and 27.83 percent agreed, while 25.22 percent remained neutral. With most of the development having been within the City of Grand Ledge, the potential for undeveloped land to be turned into commercial or residential buildings is a concern to most residents, while some are impartial to the idea.

The next statement was, "The areas near my home have improved a lot in the past few years." To this, 54.30 percent were neutral, while 16.02 percent agreed, and 16.91 percent disagreed. Since the passing of the 2002 Master Plan, the land has not been extensively developed, and it is possible many residents feel that there has not been much significant change in their neighborhoods.

To the statement, "Oneida Township is changing too quickly." 40.88 percent were neutral, while 22.06 percent disagreed. As stated previously, there have not been many extensive changes to the current layout of the township, and residents either feel neutral about this or do not think it is changing quickly.

The next statement was, "Although I live in the Township, I consider myself a resident of Grand Ledge." To this, 25.30 percent strongly agreed, and 28.27 percent agreed, while 15.48 percent remained neutral, 13.39 percent disagreed, and 17.56 percent strongly disagreed. This sentiment is distributed in terms of agreement and may be due to the density and population adjoining Grand Ledge, which is further supported by the fact that nearby addresses are postmarked as being in Grand Ledge. Those who disagree may be farther away from the city and relate more to the characteristics of the surrounding township.

For the statement, "Natural features such as the trees, creeks, and wildlife of Oneida Township are important to me." 70.81 percent strongly agreed, and 19.17 percent agreed. Overwhelming support likely draws from Oneida Township's mostly rural character, the presence of large forested areas and wetlands, and the natural amenities provided by or near the Grand River, such as Lincoln Brick Park.

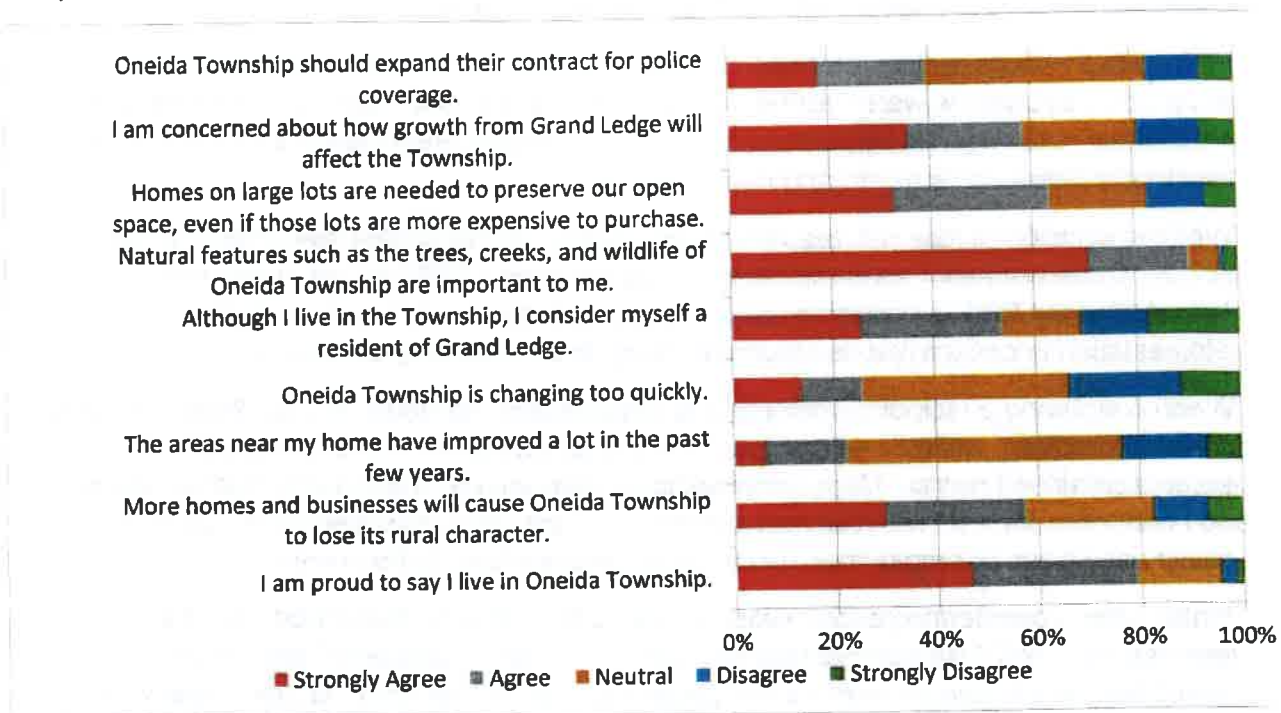
After this was the statement, "Homes on large lots are needed to preserve open space, even if those lots are more expensive to purchase." 32.45 percent strongly agreed and 30.97 percent agreed with this, while 19.17 percent remained neutral. As most homes farther from Grand Ledge occupy large lots, this supported by residents as a promotion of open space within the township, and as a means to limit dense high-intensity development.

When given the statement, "I am concerned about how growth from Grand Ledge will affect the Township." 35.59 percent strongly agreed and 22.94 percent agreed, while 22.35 percent were neutral. As Grand Ledge continues to grow and expand, township residents may be concerned about changes to the areas surrounding it due to increased development and annexation.



Finally, was the statement, "Oneida Township should expand their contract for police coverage." 43.75 percent of respondents were neutral to this, while 21.13 percent agreed and 18.15 percent strongly agreed. While most residents are neutral about this, those that agree may see it as a way of promoting public safety and welfare as the population of the township and Grand Ledge continues to grow.

### Opinions on the Quality of Life in Oneida Township



### Problems in the Township

348 township residents also gave responded to a variety of concerns mentioned during the planning process. To understand the severity of the issues, respondents were given choices between identifying them as significant problems or no problems at all. With regards to traffic speeds on township roads, 20.99 percent saw it as a significant problem, with another 21.57 percent viewing it as a problem, to 24.49 percent seeing it as neutral. This is one of the greater concerns to residents and may be in part to long straightaways without traffic calming measures to slow down speeding drivers.

For groundwater quality, 24.63 percent did not see it as a problem, and 29.97 were neutral on it. Groundwater quality is regarded with relative neutrality, and most residents either do not see it as a serious concern or are impartial to it.

With regards to the safety of township roads, 30.12 percent were neutral, while 22.51 percent saw it as a problem and 17.54 percent viewed it as a minor problem. This dovetails concerns about traffic speeds, and concerns over safety may be tied to a desire for traffic calming, enforcement, and other measures to make roads safer.



The current pace of township growth saw 38.6 percent being neutral to it, while 14.62 percent see it as a minor problem and 19.59 percent see it as a problem. On a similar note, 28.7 percent of respondents see the loss of farmland to new home development as a significant problem, and 25.22 percent view it as a problem, while 24.93 percent remain neutral. While township growth is not disliked, residents are concerned about the rate at which it is occurring, and farmland and open space being developed upon is a potential threat to the open, natural character of the township.

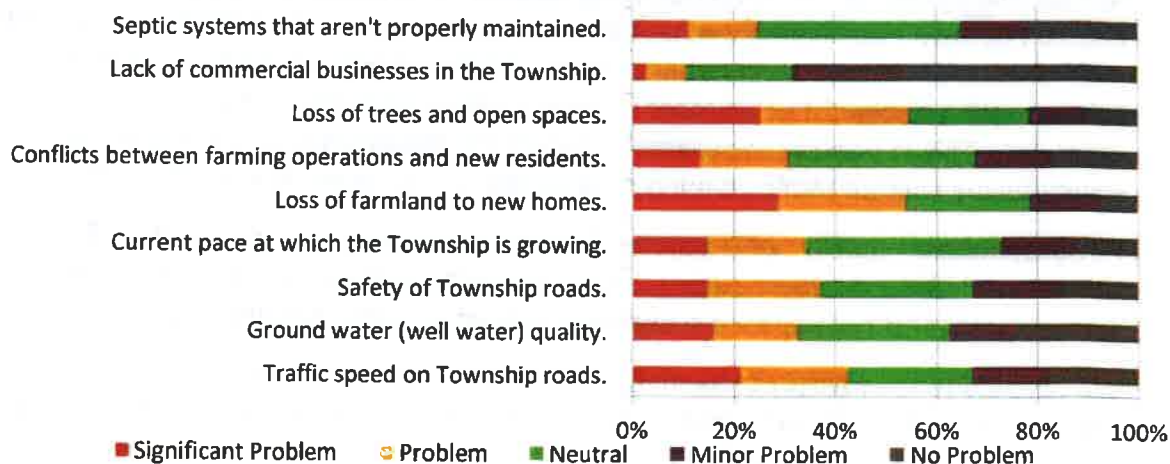
When asked about conflicts between farming operations and new residents, 36.9 percent of respondents were neutral. Residents may feel that Right to Farm protections and interest in living in an agricultural community will not create significant strain on the relationship between farmers and new residents.

With the condition of loss of trees and open spaces, 29.53 percent saw it as a problem and 25.15 percent saw it as a significant problem, while 23.98 percent were neutral. This additionally follows concerns about losing open space to new development, and deforestation is concern just as much as losing land to housing developments.

When considering a lack of commercial business within the township, 46.76 percent did not see a problem, while 21.47 percent thought of it as a minor problem and 21.18 percent remained neutral. Most commercial activity can be found within Grand Ledge, and residents may not feel that more commercial activity is necessary with economic activity and bases of employment in industrial and agricultural businesses.

Finally, when considering septic systems that aren't properly maintained, 40.18 percent were neutral, and 21.45 percent did not find it a problem. Residents who receive municipal sewer services from Grand Ledge may not find concern, as are those who keep active maintenance of their septic systems. Those who do find it to be a problem may be considering the potential for groundwater contamination from septic system failures.

### Perceptions on Problems and Concerns Within the Township



### *Future Concerns for the Township*

Residents were then asked to consider the importance of future challenges and concerns that Oneida Township may face within the next ten years. Responses were tallied based on if residents found the issues very important or not important at all.

When reading the statement "Keeping the Township the same as it is now." 27.76 percent of respondents believed it to be very important and 28.66 percent found it somewhat important, while 25.67 percent responded neutrally. The next issue was, "Preserving open fields, forests, and special view." To this, 51.02 percent of respondents found it to be very important, with another 29.45 percent believing it is somewhat important. Residents in this case may find the fields, forests, and views allotted in the township as a crucial component of maintaining the quality of the community.

The next statement, "Attracting/encouraging new commercial/industrial businesses and services." was regarded by 29.33 percent as neutral, while 22.29 percent found it not very important and 30.79 percent found it not to be important at all. With commercial and industrial activity largely centered in Grand Ledge, with some around it, residents may feel they do not need to invite more into the mostly rural, agricultural township that already maintains a stable economy with that industry.

To the statement, "Protecting farmland from development." 46.96 percent saw it as very important and 27.83 percent saw it as somewhat important, while 20 percent were neutral. For the issue of "Protecting the quality of groundwater (well water)." 75.07 percent view it as very important, with another 17.1 percent seeing it as somewhat important. Oneida Township and Grand Ledge's continued positive growth will create increased demand for development and services; protecting farmland from extensive residential development and preserving groundwater quality are both important considerations as land is developed and municipal water services are extended.

When considering "Directing growth to areas that are best suited for new development." 42.11 percent saw this issue as very important, with another 33.04 percent seeing it as somewhat important. The statement "Providing sewer and water services to more areas throughout the Township." was seen as a mixed issue, with 17.39 percent seeing it as very important, 17.1 percent as somewhat important, 30.14 percent neutral, 13.33 percent as not very important, and 22.03 percent as not important at all. These two issues correlate, as higher intensity development will tend to be directed to where water and sewer services are available or can be readily made available.

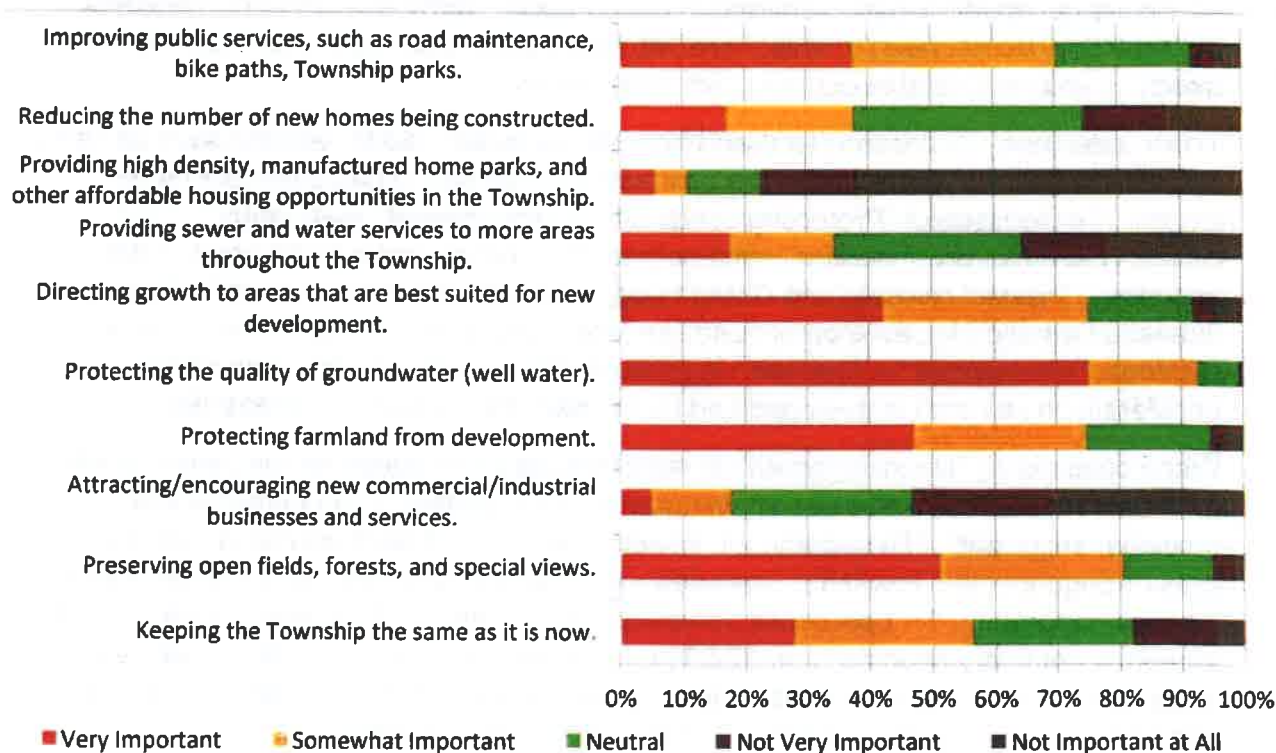
When asked if, "Providing high density, manufactured home parks, and other affordable housing opportunities in the Township." was important for Oneida Township, 61.63 percent did not find it important at all, and 15.7 percent did not see it as very important. Residents of the township may find that the current housing stock is adequate for the

growth and development as is, and are not concerned with siting higher-intensity residential options that will increase density and service demand.

The statement, "Reducing the number of new homes being constructed." was also mixed in response, with 17.06 percent finding it very important, 20.59 percent finding it somewhat important, 37.06 percent neutral, 12.94 percent finding it not very important, and 12.35 percent finding it not important at all. Similarly, residents may be divided between curtailing new home construction to preserve farmland and open space, and increasing development to allow for more residents within the township.

Finally, was the statement, "Improving public services, such as road maintenance, bike paths, Township Parks." To this, 37.43 percent found it very important, and 32.75 percent found it somewhat important. Residents may find importance in extending public services as important components of increasing the overall quality of life within the township, through means such as safety, accessibility, and recreation.

#### Perceptions on the Importance of Issues for Oneida Township in the Next 10 Years

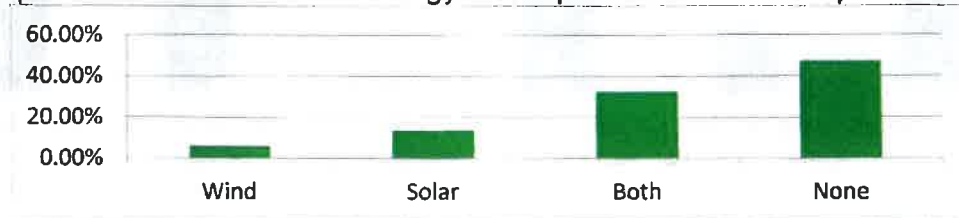


#### Alternative Energy in Oneida Township

As communities begin to shift to receiving alternative sources of energy to traditional fuel sources such as coal and natural gas, the responding residents were asked which

type they would prefer to see developed in the township (factoring out types that are unavailable, such as hydroelectricity). 6.16 percent of responses indicated interest in wind energy development and 13.78 percent showed support for installation of solar energy facilities, while 32.55 percent supported the development of both. However, 47.51 percent of respondents do not prefer any type of alternative energy source to be developed within the township.

Resident preference for alternative energy development in the township

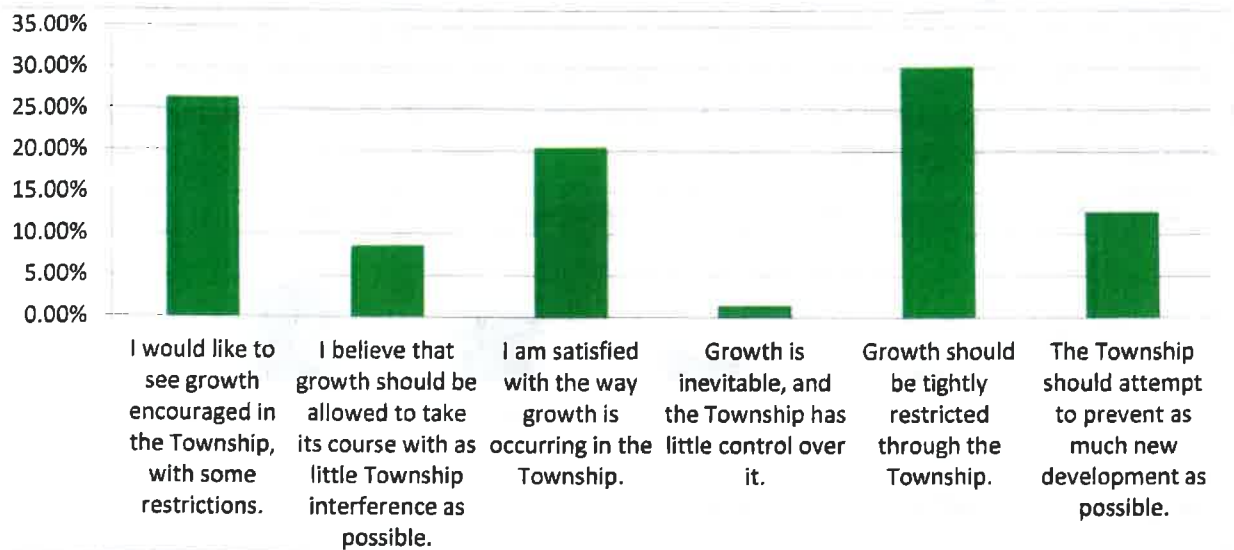


### *Feelings About Growth in Oneida Township*

The responding residents were given six different statements that would describe their personal opinions about growth within the township.

The first statement was, "I would like to see growth encouraged in the Township, with some restrictions." to which 26.41 percent of respondents believed. The next statement was, "I believe that growth should be allowed to take its course with as little Township interference as possible." Which 8.61 percent of respondents believed. Following this was the statement, "I am satisfied with the way growth is occurring in the Township." This opinion was held by 20.47 percent of respondents. The next statement was, "Growth is inevitable, and the Township has little control over it." Of which 1.48 percent of respondent felt. The next statement was, "Growth should be tightly restricted through the Township." This sentiment was felt by 30.27 percent of respondents. Finally, the statement, "The Township should attempt to prevent as much new development as possible." was maintained by 12.76 percent of respondents.

Many of the responding residents feel that growth is a positive force within the township, although many feel that growth is acceptable with restrictions on the criteria for development. Some residents believe that the township should grow without any interference through regulation or requirements, while others feel that the township should try to limit new development as much as possible. Overall, most residents feel comfortable with the township growing.



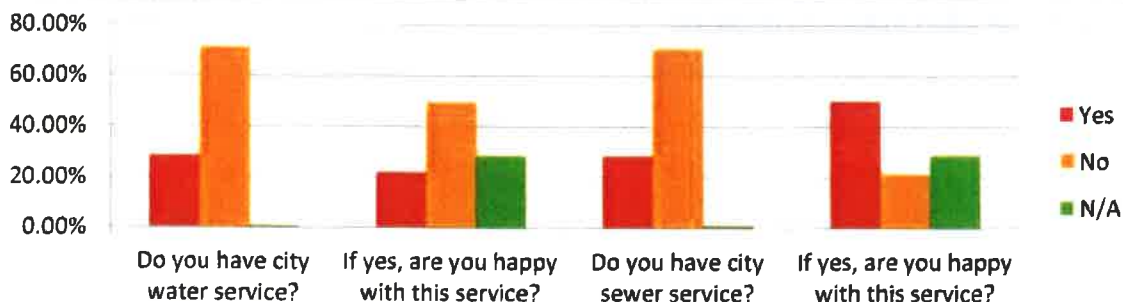
## Opinions on Growth in Oneida Township

### *Municipal Water and Sewer Services*

We asked residents questions about the water and sewer services provided by the City of Grand Ledge, and how they felt about said services. Most residents do not have municipal water or sewer service, with 70.93 percent and 70.47 percent, respectively, responding "No" to the question. Of those that have municipal water services, 49.62 percent reported that they are not happy with the service, while 21.8 percent said that they were happy, and 28.57 percent reported "Not Applicable." For municipal sewer services, 50 percent of respondents said that they were happy with the service, while 21.21 percent said they were not happy, and 28.79 percent reported "Not Applicable."

These responses show that, of the residents that do have city water services, most are not satisfied with it, which may be a result of delivery or quality issues. However, of the residents that have city sewer services, most are satisfied with the service. Those who did not report having city water and sewer services likely use a groundwater well or septic system, or a combination thereof.

### Resident Ownership and Satisfaction of City Water and Sewer Services



## **Comparisons to 2002 Community Survey**

### *Survey Response Characteristics*

During the development of the 2002 Master Plan, a community survey was also conducted to gather feedback on the status and future of the township at that time. Compared to the 338 respondents to this new survey, the 2002 survey received 703 responses. Of the respondents, nearly 300—just under half—of respondents were between the age of 45 and 59. This closely correlates with the fact that over half of the 2019 responses were from those 65 years and older, 17 years since the previous Master Plan. The second largest age group in 2002, 25 to 44, also follows this trend as ages 45 to 59 are the second largest group in the 2019 survey. This may be indicative of a retained and civically active group of residents that may have participated in the previous Master Plan update.

This age gradation also follows the length of time that residents have lived in Oneida Township. In 2002, 36 percent reported that they lived in the township for more than 25 year. In 2019, this increased to 48.55 percent. Slight increases in the length of time that respondents have lived in Oneida Township between 2002 and 2019 indicates that outmigration from the township is relatively minimal, and retention within the community is strong.

While the questions and statements are similar between the surveys, the analyses between the two differ. The same questions were asked, although the 2019 survey additionally asked about energy and water services, and expanded upon the existing questions. Compared to the 2019 survey, the 2002 community survey analysis is more targeted toward land development and the environment. The newer survey is more holistic, and focuses perceptions of the township, assets and challenges, and more robust environmental questions, focusing on analyzing all of the answers in the survey to consider all public opinion in the planning and decision-making process.

For the sake of comparison, the listed categories below compare what was reported in the community survey section of the 2002 community attitudes section and does not include the full surveys in the previous Master Plan's appendices.

### *Attitudes Toward Growth*

The first question in the 2002 survey makes the statement, "More Homes and Businesses will cause Oneida Township to lose its rural character." 44 percent of respondents strongly agreed, and 21 percent agreed, while 23 percent were neutral and 12 percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed. When this same statement was given to respondents in Question 1 in the 2019 survey, 29.57 percent strongly agreed and 27.83 agreed, maintaining a similar—but slightly smaller—57 percent of residents that believe that development will negatively impact Oneida Township's rural character. The balance shifted to nearly 24.49 percent neutral opinions on the statement, with approximately 18 percent of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. While the



concern may still be present to residents, it is possible that the few changes in greenfield development caused some residents to believe that commercial and residential development will not occur rapidly.

While not graphed in the 2002 Master Plan, the survey reports that 69 percent of residents were concerned about Grand Ledge's growth affecting the township, a concern that decreased by over 10% to 58.53 percent in 2019. This may have been seen as less pressing over time, but still a concern due to annexation and general urbanization onset by the city's growth.

#### *Agricultural Preservation and Related Issues*

The 2002 survey's second statement was regarding the importance of protecting farmland from residential development. 52 percent of respondents found it very important and 22 percent found it important, while 20 percent were neutral and 6 percent found it either slightly important or not important at all. When the same was asked as part of Question 3 in 2019, 46.96 percent believed it to be very important and 27.83 percent see it as important, while 20 percent felt neutral and just over 5 percent found it slightly important or unimportant. This indicates that, while slightly fewer see it as critically important, approximately the same proportion of residents find it to be an important issue.

In 2002, 64 percent of respondents also felt that in loss of farmland to new homes was an existing problem. This decreased to 53.92 percent in 2019. This relates to the previous set of questions, as much of the high-intensity residential development has remained around Grand Ledge and has not spread extensively into the township.

#### *Natural Features and the Environment*

Protecting natural features such as woods and wetlands has consistently been a major concern for residents. Protecting groundwater was supported nearly unanimously by respondents in 2002, with 85 percent viewing it as very important and 9 percent as important. In 2019, this only slightly decreased to 75.07 percent seeing it as very important and 17.1 percent as important. Since the amount of forest and wetlands has increased since the 2002 Master Plan, residents may feel that the areas are not threatened, but that preserving the land from future development is still an important issue.

Similarly, the 2002 Master Plan reports 92 percent in agreement that natural features were important to the character of the township. The most similar statement in 2019 was in Question 1, which reads, "Natural features such as the trees, creeks, and wildlife of Oneida Township are important to me." to which 70.81 percent strongly agreed and 19.94 percent agreed, a marginal decrease from 2002.

The final question noted in the 2002 survey section is residents' perceptions of the loss of trees and open space, which 66 percent felt was a problem or significant problem. In 2019, this concern decreased to 29.53 percent seeing it as a problem and 25.15



percent viewing it as a significant problem, for a total of 54.68 percent. As mentioned previously, the increase in forest and wetland area and replacement of vacant space with agricultural or forested lands may have slightly reduced the gravity of the issue.

### *Residential Development*

Between 2002 and 2019, the lack of necessity for a diverse housing stock has not changed significantly. The statement for both plans was, "Providing high density, manufactured home parks, and other affordable housing opportunities in the Township." In 2002, 71 percent of respondents reported this as not important, while 15 percent viewed it as slightly important. In 2019, 61.63 percent saw it as not important while 15.7 percent saw it as not very important. To respondents, this became more neutral; up almost 4 percent from 8 to 11.92 in 2019. And approximately 10 percent saw it as important or very important, compared to 6 percent in 2002. This shows that residents have become slightly more interested in the invitation of more diverse housing options, but is not of critical important to the township.

With respect to reducing the number of new homes being constructed, 41 percent found this to be important or very important in 2002 and has slightly decreased to 37 percent in 2019. For new homes, in 2002 there was a 67 percent agreement for them to be built on large lots to preserve open space, which slightly decreased to approximately 63 percent in 2019.

### *Commercial Development*

Compared to 2002, residents still do not believe that attracting new commercial and industrial businesses is a very important issue. In 2002, 67 percent did not see it as a significant problem. In 2019, 30.79 percent did not see it as important at all, 22.29 percent did not see it as very important, and 29.33 percent were neutral about its importance. With a stable commercial presence in and around Grand Ledge, residents may not feel it pressing to develop more throughout the township with easy access to the city.

### *Conclusion*

For the most part, beliefs among responding residents between 2002 and 2019 has remained relatively the same. While respondents now are slightly more interested in further development, there is continued support to maintain the open, rural, and naturalistic character of the township. The maintenance of this belief shows that it has still been component of the township's guiding principles to keep this state of the township up, and residents have since maintained the beliefs.

### **Prouds and Sorries**

#### *Background*

On August 22, 2019, the Master Plan Update's kickoff meeting was held with the Oneida Charter Township Planning Commission and Board of Trustees, while a second

meeting with the general public was held on October 28, 2019. These meetings included a brainstorming exercise called "Prouds and Sorries," which takes a general approach to what residents are proud of and sorry for in the township. Prouds are community assets that should be acknowledged, maintained, or expanded upon. Sorries are challenges and issues in the community that should be mitigated, improved, or removed. The tables below show the community assets that officials and residents are proud of, and issues that they are sorry for.

#### Oneida Charter Township Planning Commission – Kickoff Meeting

| <b>Prouds</b>                         | <b>Sorries</b>  |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Rural character                       | Relationship with Grand Ledge   |
| Convenience of Grand Ledge commercial | Blight issues   |
| Good roads                            | Drain issues  |
| Safety                                | Septic issues in areas  |
| People                                | Slow pace of residential development  |
| No drama                              | Drinking water quality – City [water] system – sediments; chlorine; calcium; cost |
| Finances of township                  | Availability of internet  |
| Township government                   | Natural gas in some areas   |

#### Oneida Charter Township General Public – Meeting 2

| <b>Prouds</b>   | <b>Sorries</b>   |
|---|--|
| Effective/responsive set of wind and solar energy regulations                   | Potholes on some roads   |
| Farmers continue to farm – maintain agricultural character of township          | Large commercial trucks tearing up local roads                               |
| Strange School  | Some county drains still need work (But things are improving)                |
| Reasonable property taxes   | Increasing traffic around Meijer   |
| Community involvement   | Snow removal in northeast portion of Township                                |
| Township Board and Planning Commission willing to listen to resident's concerns | Affordable housing to allow kids to stay in area                             |
| Road conditions   | Water and sewer rates  |
| Large residential lots predominate  | Can't walk on local/township roads because of traffic/speed/narrow shoulders |
| People take care of their property  | Lack of parks, particularly for seniors and young families                   |
| Law enforcement   | More recreational opportunities for young and old                            |
|   | Range of housing opportunities for elderly                                   |
|   | Township loses land to city  |
|   | Need sound system in boardroom   |
|   | Need to preserve groundwater quality   |

*some mixed signals*

### *Prouds*

Both township officials and the general public see the rural, agricultural character of Oneida Township as an asset that they are proud of. They additionally take pride in the good conditions of the roads, the effectiveness and communication between residents and the township government, public safety and law enforcement, and the general pleasantness of residents. These agreements show that there is a strong relationship between the community and the township government. The assets that residents support and want to keep are respected and reflected by the Planning Commission and Township Board. This is indicative that the government's vision for the township is congruent with the wants and needs of township residents.

Other points that the Planning Commission and Township Board are proud of include the convenience of nearby commercial activity in Grand Ledge, financial stability, effectiveness of the local government, and a lack of drama. Residents are proud of the regulations on wind and solar energy facilities, the Strange School in the south of the township, reasonable property taxes, an involved community, the respectfulness and receptiveness of the Planning Commission and Township Board, predominance of large-lot residences, and residents maintaining their property. This shows that residents not only approve of township activities and communicativeness, but also feel proud for the self-reliance and involvement of the community in providing for a stronger social fabric.

### *Sorries*

However, with the shared points of pride come shared disapproval of certain aspects of the township. Dovetailing the survey results, both the township government and public show disappointment over the water and sewer systems. Both groups reported dissatisfaction with municipal drinking water costs; residents also pointed out high sewer costs, and the township pointed out sediment and unwanted minerals in the drinking water. Similarly, the township and public both agree on the need to manage county drains. Groundwater is another concern to both, as residents feel it is important to preserve it, and the township acknowledges issues with septic systems—the largest threat to groundwater quality in the largely rural township. Both groups are sorry for the township's relationship with Grand Ledge, with residents particularly remarking about the township losing land to the city as a result of annexation.

This exercise also revealed some issues that can build off each other. Residents are concerned about the township's housing stock, and remarked that there are not many options for the elderly nor affordable housing to provide options for younger people. The Planning Commission and Township Board believe that residential development has been slow-paced, and presents a possible problem-to-asset in providing diverse residential options to promote development within the township.

The Township Board and Planning Commission additionally feel sorry about issues with blight, availability of the internet, and availability of natural gas in some areas.

Residents made detailed remarks about other issues they feel sorry for, particularly with inability to walk on local roads, and road damage due to heavy traffic, potholes, and narrow shoulders. Residents also expressed disappointment with the lack of recreational options, especially for young residents, families, and the elderly. The availability of recreational options and safe ways of walking along the roads both reflect the desire for pedestrian developments shown in the survey.

Finally, residents believe that the township hall needs a sound system in the boardroom, which may be a result of communication difficulties during public meetings without one.

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