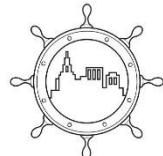


Tallmadge Charter Township, Ottawa County, MI

# Master Plan Open House

Summary of Results

Fresh Coast Planning  
2-13-2026



Fresh Coast  
Planning

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## Executive Summary

As part of the master plan update process, the 2025 Tallmadge Master Plan Open House was held on October 29, 2025, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the Tallmadge Charter Township Hall. The open house focused on two main topics: residential development and commercial development. The open house contained ten stations for the attendees to review and provide feedback on their likes and dislikes of the Township, residential development, commercial development, and their vision for future Township development. It appears the open house was very successful in drawing participants; therefore, the results provide significant feedback. It is important to note the participants appeared to be in the majority of age 30 and older therefore we could not capture the younger generation's results as accurately. Nonetheless, following the completion of all stations, it appears we accurately captured the participants' intent.

According to the open house sign-in sheets, 120 people attended. From our observations, it appears the number of attendees was more accurately around 140-160 people. Based on the results of the open house, there were attendees from all areas of the Township. It is important to note that the open house structure is a form of a focus group which has advantages and disadvantages. Disadvantages include that it is challenging for the results to be representative of the whole population of the Township and the results collected are a challenge to analyze since it is challenging to identify an individual's opinion from the group's opinion. Some of the advantages are it captured information from attendees in their own language, and the group dynamic and the setup of the posters allowed for attendees to "piggyback" off each other's responses and from that generate their own ideas.

Protecting rural character and limiting residential and commercial development are the major themes that were presented by attendees. Support exists for large lots, preserving trees in neighborhoods, native landscaping, landscaping requirements for both residential and commercial developments, and high-quality buildings and site design for commercial buildings.

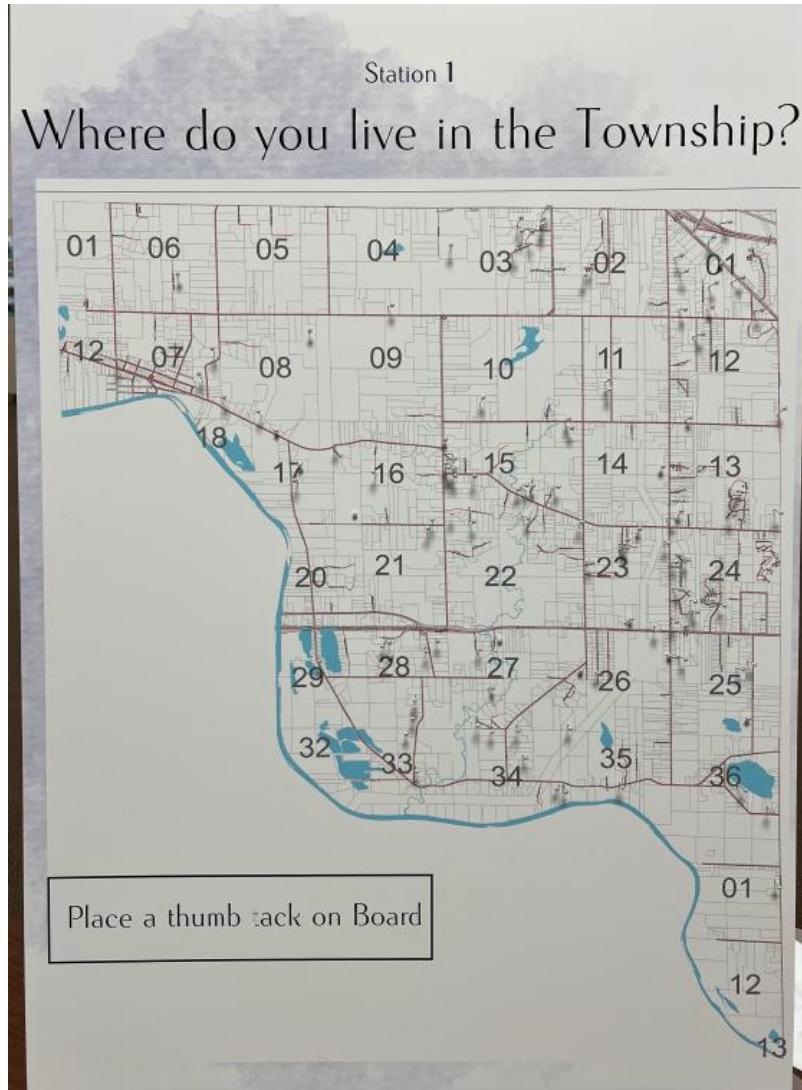
Attendees appear to conclude the growth in the Township is too fast and would like it to slow down. Any development should be directed to happen in such a way that the rural and natural character of the community is protected and enhanced. Additionally, since commercial and residential development must be permitted somewhere in the Township, the attendees appeared to want residential development to take place in the northeast section of the Township (North of Leonard Street, East of 24th Avenue), and commercial development to take place scattered on Lake Michigan Drive.

Lastly, there appears to be concerns regarding preserving rural and agricultural land, traffic and law enforcement presence, and road conditions.

## Station 1: Where Attendees Live

### Where do you live in the Township?

At this station, attendees were asked to put a thumb tack on the Township map of where they lived in the Township. Attendees appeared to be from all over the Township. There was no concentration in a particular area.



## Station 2: Information for Attendees and Best place for Commercial and Residential Development.

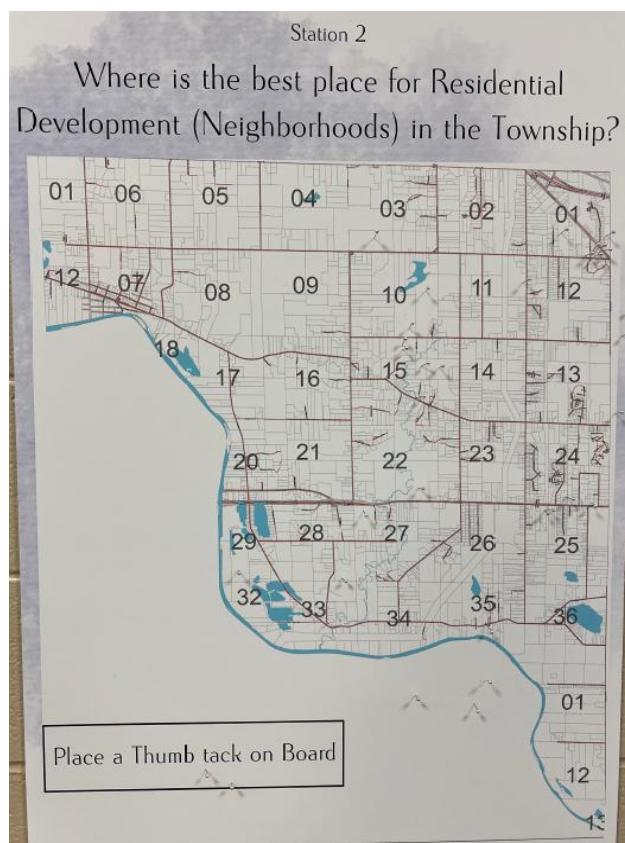
### What is a Master Plan?

At this station attendees heard from Fresh Coast Planning on what a master plan is, why they should care, and why we need their input. Overall, attendees asked questions and expressed concerns with Fresh Coast Planning about too much development possibly occurring in the Township in the future.

### Where is the best place for Residential Development in the Township?

Attendees were shown a map of the Township and asked to put a thumb tack where they think the best place for residential development should go. If you look at this poster you will see there are only 32 thumbtacks on the board, as opposed to the 120 people that signed in and the 140-160 that appeared to attend. Therefore, we do not believe the results of this poster are an accurate representation of all the residents that attended the open house and even more so are not an accurate representation of all of the residents of the Township.

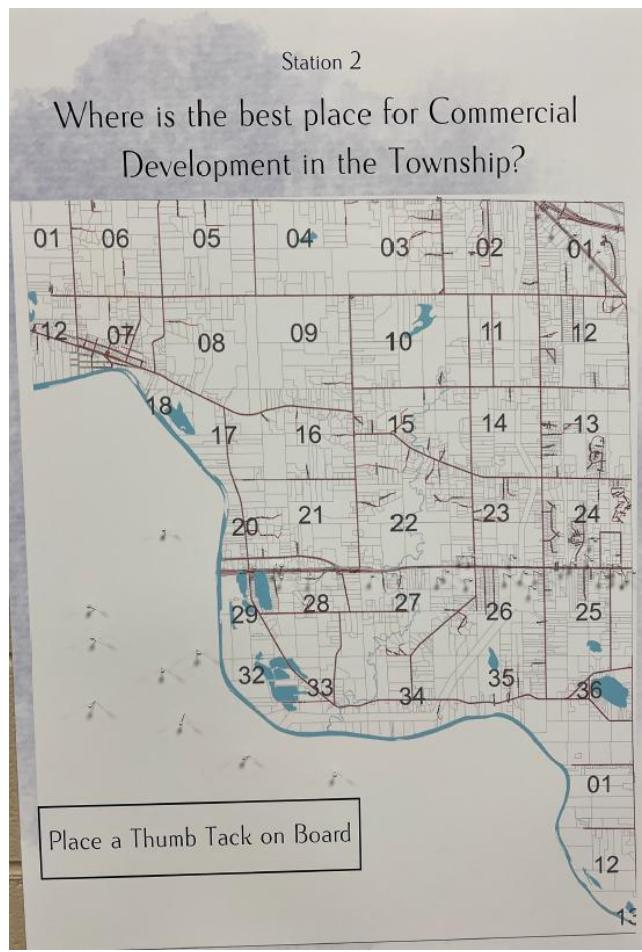
Nonetheless, to work with the results we were given from who participated with the map, it appears 25% would like residential development to not happen in the Township, 47% would like residential development to take place in northeast section of the Township (North of Leonard Street, East of 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue), and 28% would like residential development in the south portion of the Township (South of Leonard Street, scattered north of Lake Michigan Drive and South of Lake Michigan Drive).



## Where is the best place for Commercial Development in the Township?

Attendees were shown a map of the Township and asked to put a thumb tack where they think the best place for commercial development should go. If you look at this poster you will see there are only 40 thumbtacks on the board, as opposed to the 120 people that signed in and the 140-160 that appeared to attend. Therefore, we do not believe the results of this poster are an accurate representation of all the residents that attended the open house and even more so are not an accurate representation of all of the residents of the Township

Nonetheless, to work with what results we were given from who participated with the map, it appears 23% would like commercial development to not happen in the Township, 12% would like commercial development to take place in northeast section of the Township on Ironwood Drive, and 65% would like commercial development scattered on Lake Michigan Drive.



## Station 3: Likes and Dislikes

### Describe what you don't like about Tallmadge

Overall, the attendees appear to have issues with traffic, development, taxes, and road conditions. Below is a list of each comment that was put on a sticky note on the poster board:

- Fast Traffic on “Country Roads” (2)
- There is no one looking after the water issues. Planning for future use
- Crazy Fast traffic on Leonard near Lamont
- Too much developments (3)
- Please 8<sup>th</sup> Ave and Lake MI Dr has too many accidents, we need a turn signal there!
- Trash/old cars etc. in front of yards or lawns
- All the lumber being sold in residential areas, zoning not enforced
- Commercial Development
- Development influenced by outside source. IE not Tallmadge resident
- Dirt Roads (6)
- Development without adherence to the Master Plan – seems shady
- Traffic speed, high weeds along roads, becoming residential
- Getting built up – stop already (2)
- Not enough housing
- Minimum 2.5 acre requirement per lot
- Rezoning out from underneath us (2)
- High Taxes (Make it livable)
- Losing rural land
- Changing the master plan without a vote
- Lake MI Drive, people drive way too fast
- Lack of Natural Gas, Sutters Road
- Speed on Lake Michigan Drive
- Loud vehicles and extremely high speeds on luce street, excess 100 mph
- Cable Company franchise fee
- Save the farmland! The rural charm is being pushed away
- Motorcycles going 90mph on Leonard
- Not enough police/speed trap presence on 8<sup>th</sup> ave/ironwood
- Surcharge on our property tax. Do the work your/ourselves
- Too crowded near Ironwood, 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, Hayes. Not well planned
- Too high property taxes
- No ADUs in single family residential. Our parents are gaining out of living alone
- Prox. to the racetrack, noise
- Taxes for seniors (2)
- Potential development on Ironwood Corr. NO!!
- Too much traffic (3)
- Speed limits too fast on 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave
- No high speed internet
- LM Drive speed and noise
- Signage on Leonard needs solar LED lighting
- Keep east side higher housing, keep west side rural
- Lack of internet provider choices (3)
- Add some solar slow down + stop signs (2)
- Losing farmland to dev.
- High taxes (2)
- Unkept roads

## Describe your favorite things about Tallmadge.

Overall, the attendees appear to enjoy the rural character, spacious lots, location, and the quiet aspect of Tallmadge and would like to keep it that way. Below is a list of each comment that was placed on the poster board, and the number of times it was used:

- Quiet (5)
- Friendly feel
- Rural (12)
- 2.5 acre minimum (5)
- The community is friendly and helpful. Love our small Marne community (2)
- Close to amenities
- I like the rural/agricultural areas. I want more conservation and preservation of open space
- Beautiful area
- Nice safe place to raise a family, close to everything important yet rural enough (2)
- No battery plant
- Large lots, close to everything, mix of agricultural and residential
- It is not GR or Allendale
- We love Mike Eppink!
- Love the people and the small town charm
- The Park
- Growth is good but needs to be appropriate location, business stay on LMD.
- Rural Preserve (2)
- Leave it Rural! I move here for that
- Rural Country but still close to city (4)
- Spacious lots
- Love the Tallmadge Twp park area
- It's the country
- Farm land
- Still a farming community
- Update the search feature in the website to link things better

## Station 4: Residential

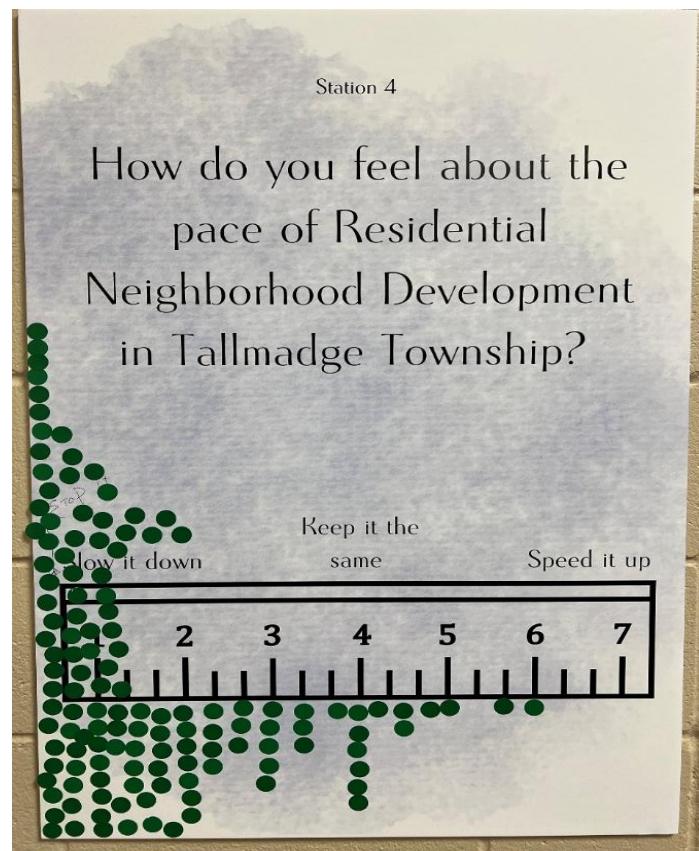
### What type of neighborhood layout do you like best?

Attendees were shown a poster with two different neighborhood layout types, one being clustered lots, and one being large lots. We explained the better planning of clustered lots to preserve farmland, many attendees felt that clustered lot sizes were preferable. There were 123 stickers on the board and 68% of respondents preferred clustered lots, and 32% of respondents preferred large lots.



### How do you feel about the pace of residential development in Tallmadge Township?

It appears from the results that attendees would prefer for the pace of residential development in Tallmadge to slow down.



### Would you like multi-use pathways in residential areas?

Attendees appear to be split on preference of having multi-use pathways in residential areas with a slight preference towards having them over not having them, the pie chart and poster from the open house below shows the results.



## How do you feel about using landscape buffers to separate the residential areas from agricultural land?

Attendees appear to prefer having landscape buffers to separate residential areas from agricultural land.



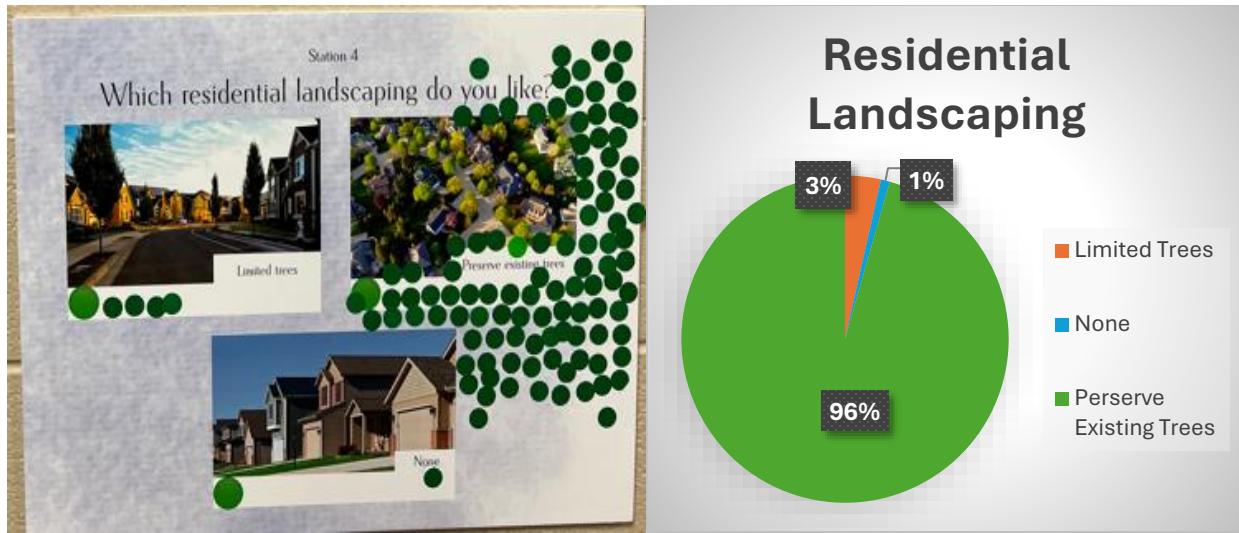
## Which neighborhood designs do you like?

Attendees were shown four neighborhood designs to choose from. Of the 117 responses, 80% liked large-lot neighborhoods and only 2% liked cul-de-sacs.



## Which residential landscaping do you like?

Attendees were shown three different types of residential landscaping, out of 113 responses, 96% preferred to preserve existing trees.



## Should there be rules about required landscaping for developments?

Attendees were shown a picture of a residential development with no landscaping and a picture of a residential development with landscaping. The attendees were mixed on if there should be rules that require landscaping in residential developments, but 60% did prefer required landscaping.



## Which size front yards do you like?

Attendees were shown three different types of front yards. Of the 105 responses 82% preferred large front yards.



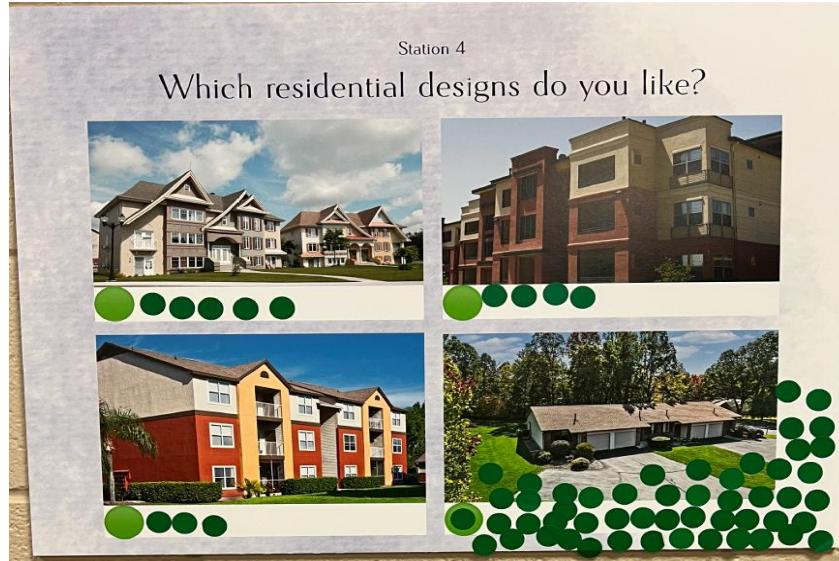
### Which residential design do you like?

Attendees were shown four different duplex residential designs. From this, respondents seemed to prefer duplexes that blend in or look like a single-family, traditional style neighborhood.



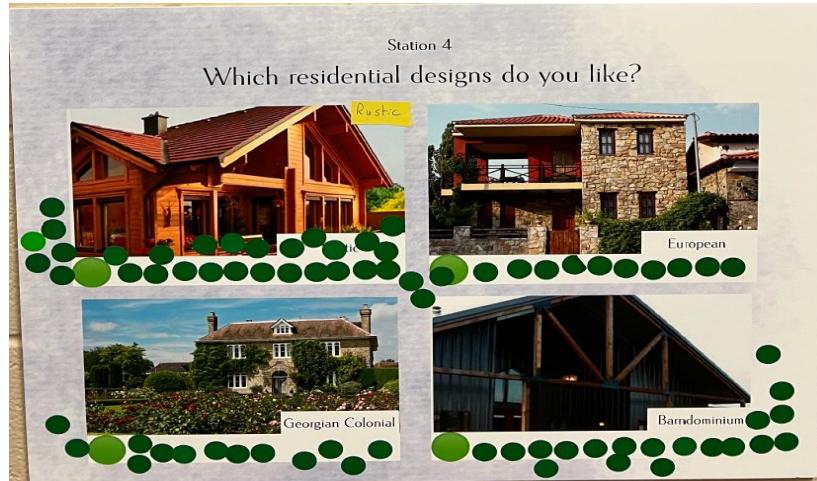
### Which residential design do you like?

Attendees were shown four different multifamily residential pictures. The first three were multi-level buildings. The fourth was a one-story, four-unit building. Single-story condos would be a preferred style for multi-family/senior housing.



## Which residential designs do you like?

Attendees were shown four different residential designs to choose from. There were 73 responses. Forty-one percent preferred a rustic style, with barndominiums coming in second at twenty-six percent. Fifteen percent preferred European and eighteen percent Georgian Colonial. From this, respondents seemed to prefer barndominiums and rustic style façade.



## Which residential designs do you like?

Attendees were shown four different residential styles to choose from. There were 93 responses. Fifty-nine percent preferred Modern Farmhouse Style with Craftsman Style coming in second at twenty percent. Fifteen percent preferred Traditional Style, and only six percent preferred Modern Style. From this, respondents seemed to prefer Modern Farmhouse Style.



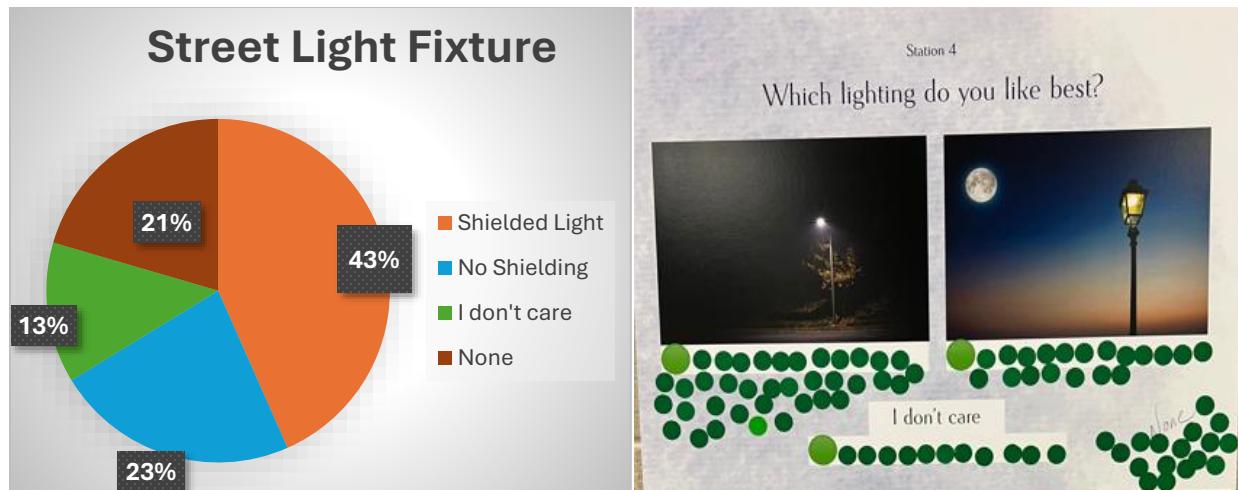
### Should residential developments be required to have streetlights?

Attendees were shown two pictures, one street with streetlights, one with no streetlights. There were 114 responses. Results suggest that attendees appear to prefer no streetlights.



### Which lighting do you like best?

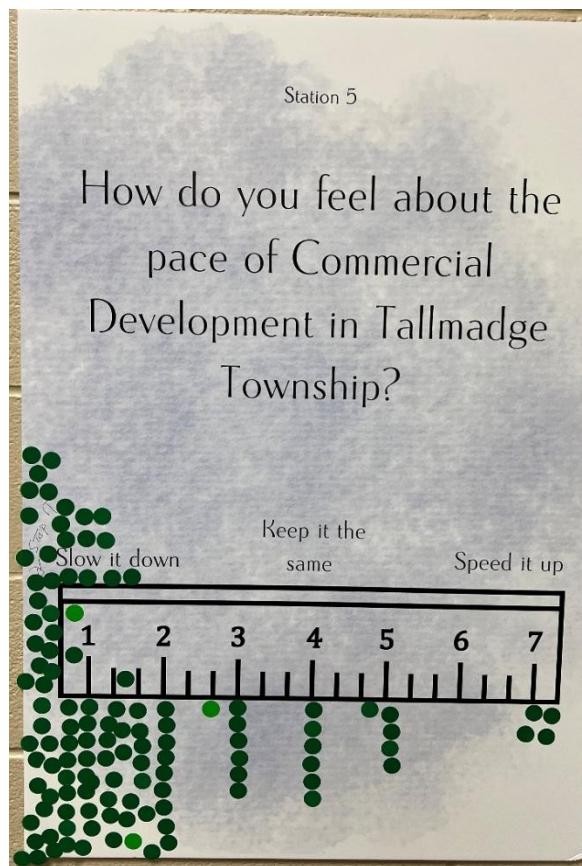
Attendees were shown two different types of light fixtures to choose from. Out of 83 responses, 43% preferred light with shielding. 21% want no lighting, and 23% preferred no shielding. Given the results of the question above, with the majority not wanting street lighting, if the attendees have to have lighting it appears they would prefer shielded lights.



## Station 5: Commercial

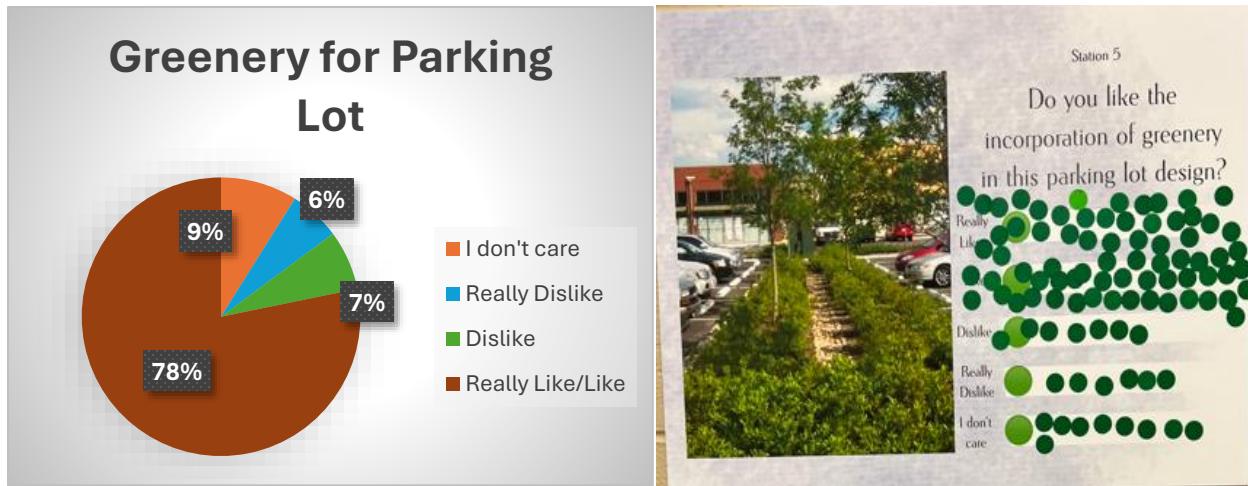
### How do you feel about the pace of Commercial Development in Tallmadge Township?

It appears from the results that attendees would prefer for the pace of commercial development in Tallmadge to slow down.



## Do you like the incorporation of greenery in this parking lot design?

On this poster attendees were shown a picture of a parking lot with greenery (islands) in a parking lot. Out of 101 responses it appears the attendees favor having greenery in parking lots as 78% really liked or liked greenery in the parking lot. In the pie chart below, we put “Really Like” and “Like” together due to the poster that was used which had stickers crossing one another making it hard to decipher between the two.



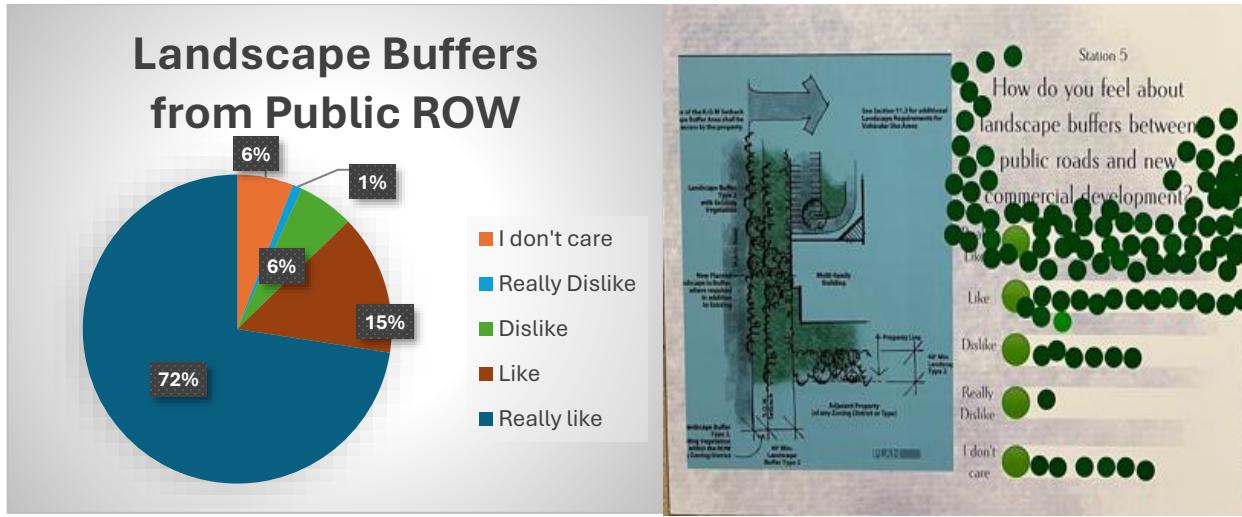
## Do you like this parking lot design with limited greenery?

On this poster attendees were shown a picture of a parking lot with little to no greenery. Out of 95 responses it appears attendees prefer having a lot of greenery in parking lots as 76% really disliked or disliked the limited greenery in the parking lot. In the pie chart below, we put “Really Dislike” and “Dislike” together due to the poster that was used had stickers crossing one another making it hard to decipher between the two.



## How do you feel about landscape buffers between public roads and new commercial development?

On this poster attendees were shown a picture of a development with lots of landscaping between a public road and the building. From the results it appears attendees favor having a landscape buffer between public roads and new commercial development.



## How do you feel about using landscape buffers to separate commercial areas from other uses?

Attendees were shown a picture of landscaping in front of a commercial building providing a buffer from another use. From the results it appears attendees would like landscape buffers between commercial use and another use such as residential. In the pie chart below, we put "Really Like" and "Like" together due to the poster that was used had stickers crossing one another making it hard to decipher between the two.



## Do you like mixed commercial and residential uses?

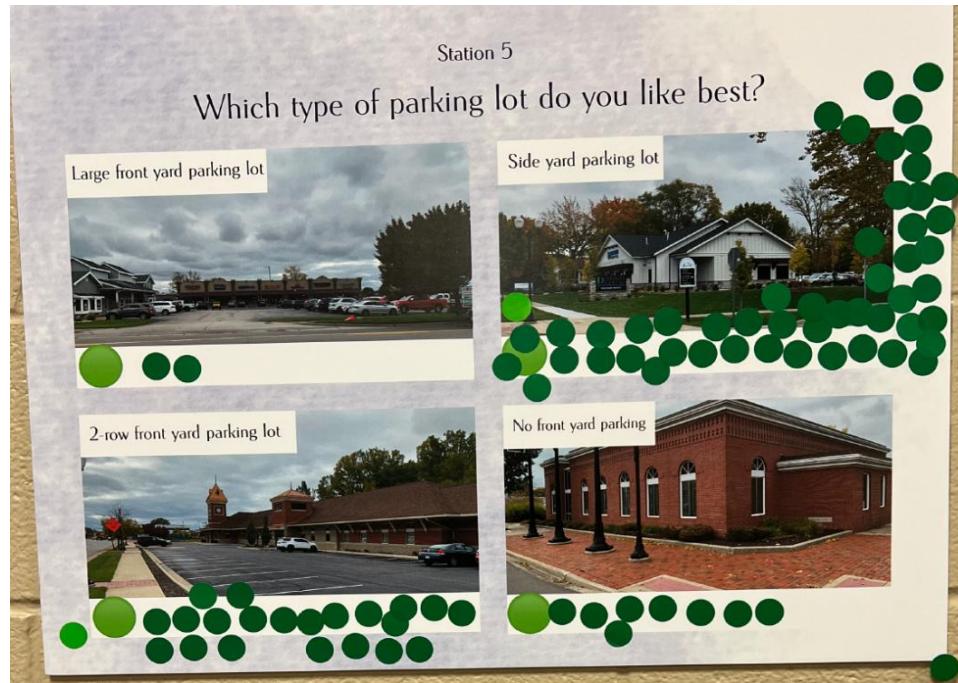
Attendees were shown a multi-use commercial and residential building. From our observations we believe some of the people may have reacted to the design and the look of the building rather than the actual use of the building. Therefore, these results may have been slightly different if it had been a different picture of this same use or if we had shown multiple multi-use buildings. Overall, you will notice the results show the attendees have mixed opinions on the idea of mix-use commercial and residential buildings with the highest percentage of attendees really dislike mixed uses at 36%.



## Which type of parking lot do you like best?

Attendees were shown four different pictures of parking lot types. The results indicate the attendees prefer side yard parking lots.

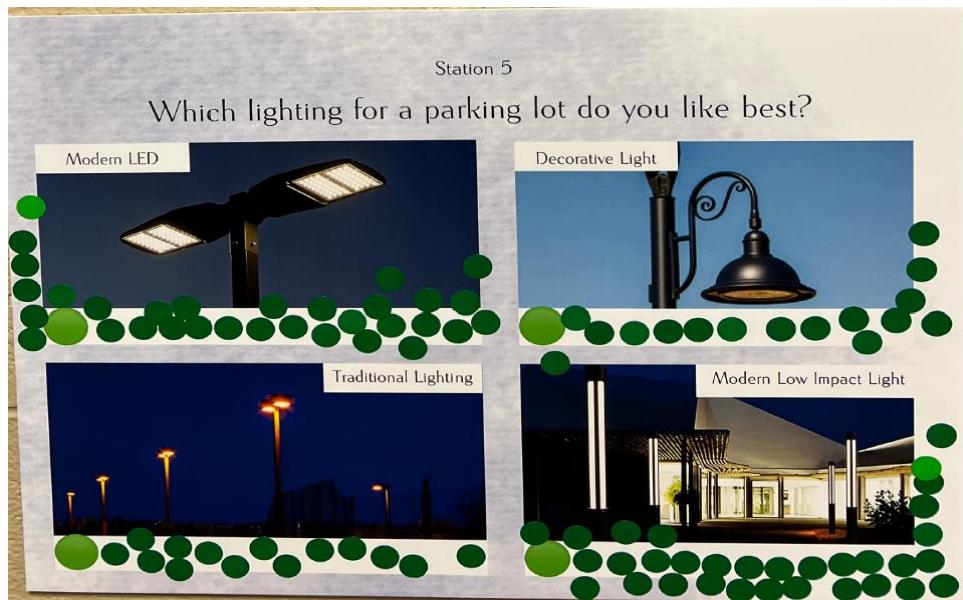
Large front yard parking lot	Side yard parking lot	2-row front yard parking lot	No front yard parking
2%	61%	26%	11%



### Which lighting for a parking lot do you like best?

Attendees were shown four different pictures of lighting design types. The results indicate the attendees prefer modern LED and modern low-impact lights both at 34%.

Modern LED	Decorative Light	Traditional Lighting	Modern low-impact light
34%	17%	15%	34%



## Which landscaping designs do you like for a commercial building?

Attendees were shown four pictures of different designs of landscaping. The results indicate the attendees prefer native landscaping for commercial buildings.

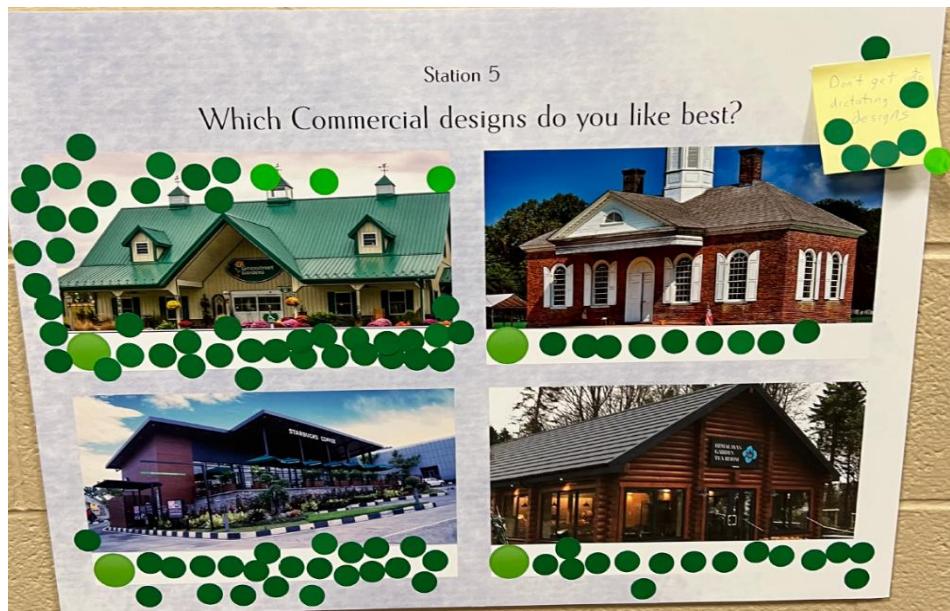
Heavy Landscaping	Medium Landscaping	No Landscaping	Native Landscaping
2%	32%	3%	63%



## Which Commercial designs do you like best?

Attendees were shown four pictures of different designs of commercial buildings. Overall, it appears attendees prefer rural barn style and modern style for commercial buildings.

Rural Barn Style	Historical Style	Modern Style	Log Cabin Style	Don't get into Dictating Designs
46%	9%	22%	15%	8%



### Which Commercial designs do you like best?

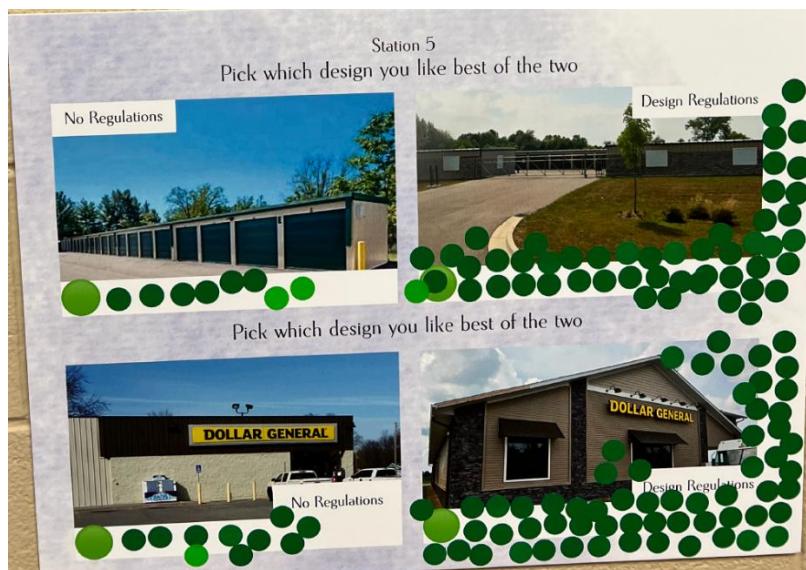
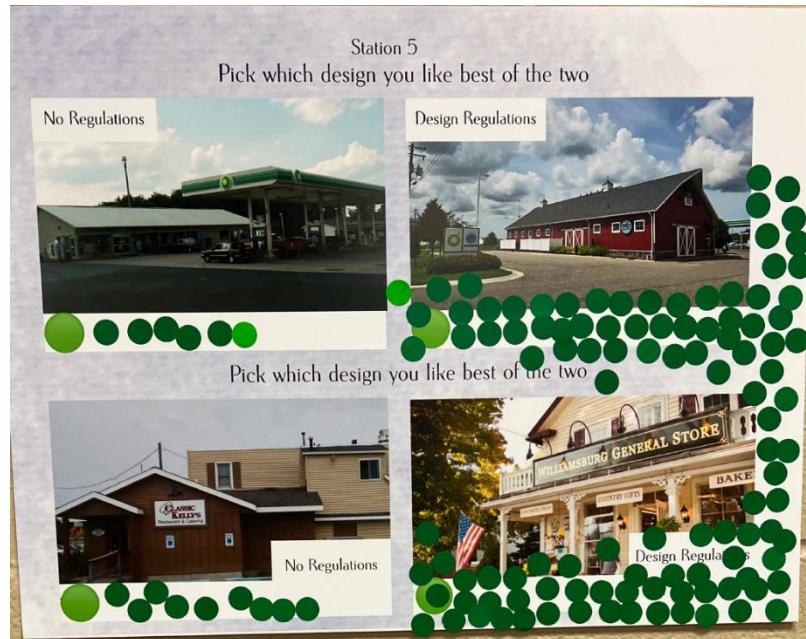
Attendees were shown four pictures of different designs of commercial buildings. Overall, it appears attendees prefer Farmer Market style and Strip Mall style. Varying Roof Lines, and Decorative Lighting Style for commercial buildings.

Window and Flat Roof Style	Varying Roof Lines, and Decorative Lighting Style	Farmer Market Style	Bright Rustic Style
2%	45%	47%	6%



## Regulations vs. No Regulations for Commercial Building Design

There were two posters that each showed four commercial buildings, two were buildings that had design regulations, two were buildings that did not have design regulations. For the first two pictures 90% of respondents liked the building with design regulations; for the second set of two photos 87% of respondents liked the building with design regulations. The same theme is repeated on the next poster as well. So, while people like regulated designs better, we do not know what they want more of: limited government regulation or regulated buildings. In other words, if people knew the amount of regulation that will be added to have a certain appearance of buildings, they may have voted a different way. Nonetheless attendees appear to like commercial buildings with design regulations.



## Station 6: Lake Michigan Drive East of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue

At this station there was a poster asking the residents what they would like to see on Lake Michigan Drive East of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The residents then wrote on a sticky note answering this question and posting it on the Board. Overall attendees appear to not want any more development on Lake Michigan Drive. Additionally, if development must happen attendees would like to see it on a small scale. Below are the residents' responses.

- Nothing (63)
- Local Business only, no outside companies moving into Tallmadge
- New Restaurants, high end (2)
- Nothing we chose to live in the country, not in town
- Less
- KFC (3)
- Cluster Businesses
- Park with flowers and trees (5)
- Less, its horrible and dangerous (2)
- Business
- Walmart
- Farms
- Upscale restaurants
- Community Center: pool, indoor workout area (3)
- East is okay, west no!!!
- Its going to end up commercial in the end, how do we shape it?
- Why can't we leave things alone? Its not all about the \$ (2)
- Cannot support more volume
- Retail restaurant (5)
- Library & Public Spaces (4)
- Small business retail on Lake Michigan Drive
- A Trader Joes
- KFC or Burger king but way closer to Standale @ township line

## Station 7: River Hill Drive

At this station there was a poster asking the residents what they would like to see on River Hill Drive. The residents then wrote on a sticky note answering this question and posting it on the Board. Overall attendees appear to want to leave River Hill Drive alone. Additionally, attendees would like to see some development but on a small scale of boat ramps, natural areas, cleaned up landscaping, and parks. Below are the residents' responses.

- It feels in decline
- Leave open space, natural areas
- Leave it alone (30)
- Farmers market
- No change (2)
- Upscale restaurant (3)
- Rural preserve 2 ½ acre min

- Apartments
- Something for the grand valley students
- Clean it up, small shops? (5)
- A park would be nice! (6)
- Entertainment options – bowling, archery. Golfing, etc
- Not a chain store (3)
- Nicer shops, clean up landscape (2)
- Leave open (3)
- Park (3)
- Nothing please don't develop every bit of land there is
- Residential & open space
- Let people live there rather than rural remote area
- Leave it be, no housing
- Boat ramp (5)
- Housing
- Fields
- Construction company
- Orchard (2)

## Station 8: Wants and Desires

### What would you like to see in the Township?

At this station there was a poster with a list of different activities/venues that attendees may like to see in the Township. Then there was a poster next to it giving them the opportunity to formulate their own ideas of other things they want to see in the Township by writing on a sticky note and placing it on the board. Overall attendees appear to want agricultural activities (Farm Markets) and to preserve rural character. Additionally, attendees would like to see more traffic and speed limit control. Below is the list we provided them with and the number of stickers that were by each one:

- U-Pick: 15 green stickers
- Farm Markets: 57 stickers
- Food trucks: 4 stickers
- Restaurants: 12 stickers
- Concert Venue: 1 sticker and a resident put a sticky note on it stating, "Absolutely not!!!" with two people putting stickers on the sticky note
- Events Barns: 4 stickers
- Playgrounds: 15 stickers
- A resident made a sticky note that stated "Nothing" with ten residents putting stickers on the sticky note

Below is a list of what people wrote on sticky notes of what they would like to see in the Township:

- Agriculture (6)
- Open Space (3)
- Cops patrolling Lake MI Dr (10)
- Land preserved for agriculture (5)

- Less catering of GVSU (4)
- Preserving rural atmosphere (5)
- Excessive traffic on Fennessey & Linden, Skirting Lake Michigan Drive & Wilson Intersection (2)
- Turn light 8<sup>th</sup> & Lake Michigan Drive (10)
- Less of the world revolving around GVSU students (4)
- Agricultural preservation (4)
- Splash pad (4)
- Rural Preserve (14)
- In Swap Land or Park (2)
- No YMCA, rural, pickle ball courts (2)
- Sheriff patrol on Luce
- Library (2)
- Cops enforcing speeds! (2)
- Trader Joes
- Less traffic & lower speed limit on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue (3)
- Open undeveloped space
- Less traffic on Leonard Street (2)
- Nothing (3)

## What is important to you in the Township?

At this station there was a poster with a list of different aspects of what is important to attendees in the Township. Then there was a poster next to it giving them the opportunity to formulate their own ideas of what is important to them in the Township by writing on a sticky note and placing it on the board. Overall attendees appear to place a high level of importance on internet, conditions of roads, farming operations, law enforcement, and preserving rural character and land. Below is the list we provided them with and the number of stickers that were by each one:

- Shopping: 2 stickers
- Internet: 55 stickers
- Conditions of Roads: 74 stickers
- Farming Operations: 63 stickers
- Recreational Activities and Facilities: 30 stickers

Below is a list of what people wrote on sticky notes of what is important to them in the Township:

- Traffic lights @ 8<sup>th</sup> Ave and Lake Mi Drive!
- Being a buffer between GR and MSK – Keep it coming
- Preserving Farm Land
- Preserve the land! (8)
- Natural Open Spaces (4)
- Conservation/preservation of open space and natural areas (3)
- Open and Transparent Township. Poor MTGS and minutes online in a timely fashion. Leave open spaces. Don't let walker and/or GVSU bully you into bad decisions. (5)
- A faster access to Jenison and Grandville (3)
- Preserving rural atmosphere (6)
- A place to take yard waste and wood (3)

- Preserve the country feel even when development is necessary (5)
- Farming, preserve the land
- Keep apartments and multi-unit housing from spreading out of GR & Standale (5)
- Speed limit enforcement on Lake Mich Dr. (3)
- Less Sub-divisions (5)
- Need another industrial park (jobs!) No new Ind Park and Tallmadge land park 30+ years ago
- Paved Roads and speed restrictions (2)
- Farm land, Rural Preserve (3)
- Preserve farmland (6)
- Smaller lots on east side, limit developments on west end
- Slow down traffic on Luce between Kenowa and linden, more patrols
- This is a farming community! Stop trying to change it! (2)
- Farmland Preservation (6)
- Keeping it beautiful by enforcing zoning!!!
- Not being forced to be on city water and sewer (4) etc.
- What about farms? (4)
- Traffic enforcement
- No more commercial on Lake Michigan Drive (2)
- Keep it rural (6)
- Police speed on M45, 8<sup>th</sup> 24<sup>th</sup>, Johnson (5)
- Quiet country
- Senior Citizen programming/services (3)
- More affordable housing
- No more commercial! Stop the development on Ironwood (2)
- Speed checks, enforce the speed limit (4)
- Rural (7)
- Developing is happening too fast
- Better traffic control (2)
- ADVs
- Senior Services
- Preserve the land that is open- stop developing (2)
- Turn signal @ Lake Michigan Drive, too many accidents (4)

## Station 9: What Would You Do?

### Next Steps and what would you do if you were in charge of the Township for one day?

At this station attendees got to review a poster on next steps the Township will take with the creation of the updated master plan and how their voice will be heard. They were asked to write on a postcard what they would do if they were in charge of the Township for one day. Overall, there were eighteen postcards. Below is a list of what people wrote on the post cards of what they would do:

- Add splash pad for families similar to George TWSP

- Buy the property where the house was torn down that burned and the land behind it and expand the park and new entrance with that property
- Consider a full-time fire department
- I'd hire a planner that lives in our township & actually care about what goes on here
- I would ensure all MTGS and meaningful decisions were easy to find online so that everyone can see and hear what is happening
- I would eliminate property taxes for seniors! (4)
- Reverse development, make a park
- Change the driveway design for this back to what it was, very inconvenient now (2)
- Pave Johnson from 8<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>
- Pre-designate green space areas that would never be develop. There are so many naturally beautiful areas that should be permanently left wild & undeveloped; for future generations to know what real nature used to be!
- Stop Commercial Development (8)
- Make Luce and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue safer for walkers, runners and bicyclists
- Nothing
- Improve cooperative communication with county road commission with resident input
- I would see if the township park could be expanded, if not a turn signal at 8<sup>th</sup> & Lake Mi Drive (2)
- Eliminate the ironwood corridor development
- I would ensure that the open country feel of the township would stay in tact even with ongoing and new residential and commercial development (2)
- Please Please Preserve rural atmosphere. Lake MI Drive is where the Commercial Development should stay. You're changing too quickly (2)

## Station 10: Open-House Experience

### How was your experience tonight?

At this station attendees got to use a sticker to mark on a poster how their experience at the open house was.

