

Marathon Township Master Plan Community Survey Results

Survey

Introduction

During the Marathon Township Master Plan update, the Planning Commission developed an independent survey to engage residents, property owners, business owners, and those who visit the township. The survey was available online as well as in hard copy forms. Providing an opportunity to share input and preferences for the future development of the township. By incorporating the survey results, the community can develop a vision for land use policy and management, as seen in **Chapter TBD**, Goals, Objectives, and Tasks. At the end of the Master Plan process, citizens will be afforded an opportunity to review the draft of the Master Plan and speak at a public hearing held prior to the adoption of the Master Plan.

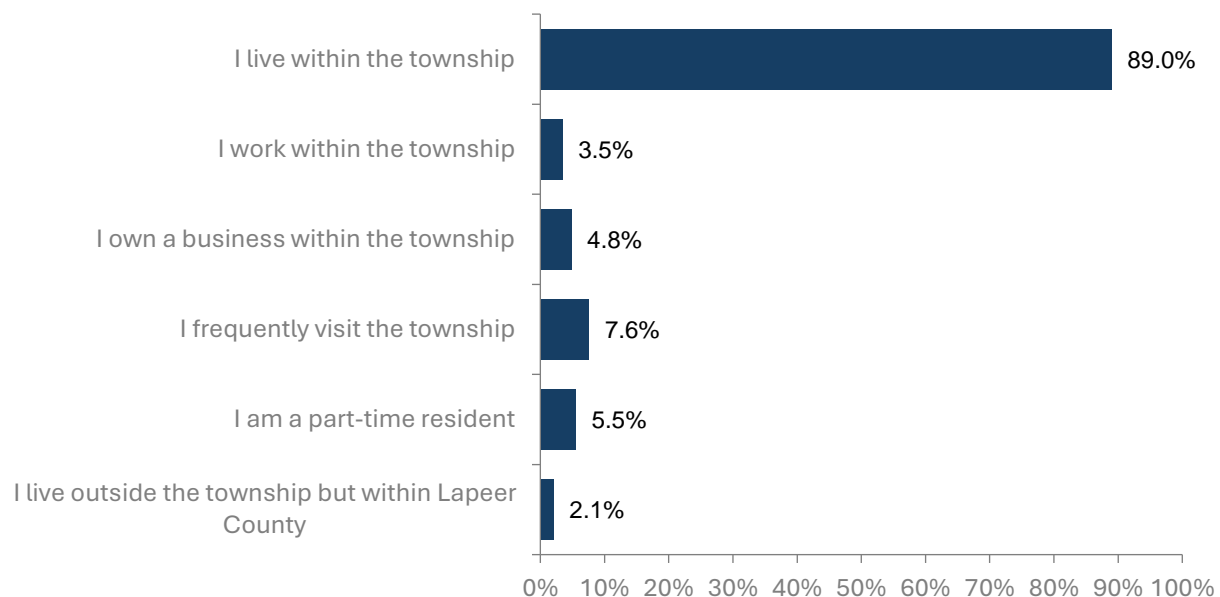
Survey Results

The Planning Commission conducted a survey to gather public input on topics such as quality of life, business development, and related issues. A total of one hundred forty-seven (147) survey responses were received and the results are presented in this document. A copy of the survey and the responses are attached in Appendix X.

Figure X-X: Connection

What is your connection to the Township of Marathon? (Select all that apply)

145 responses

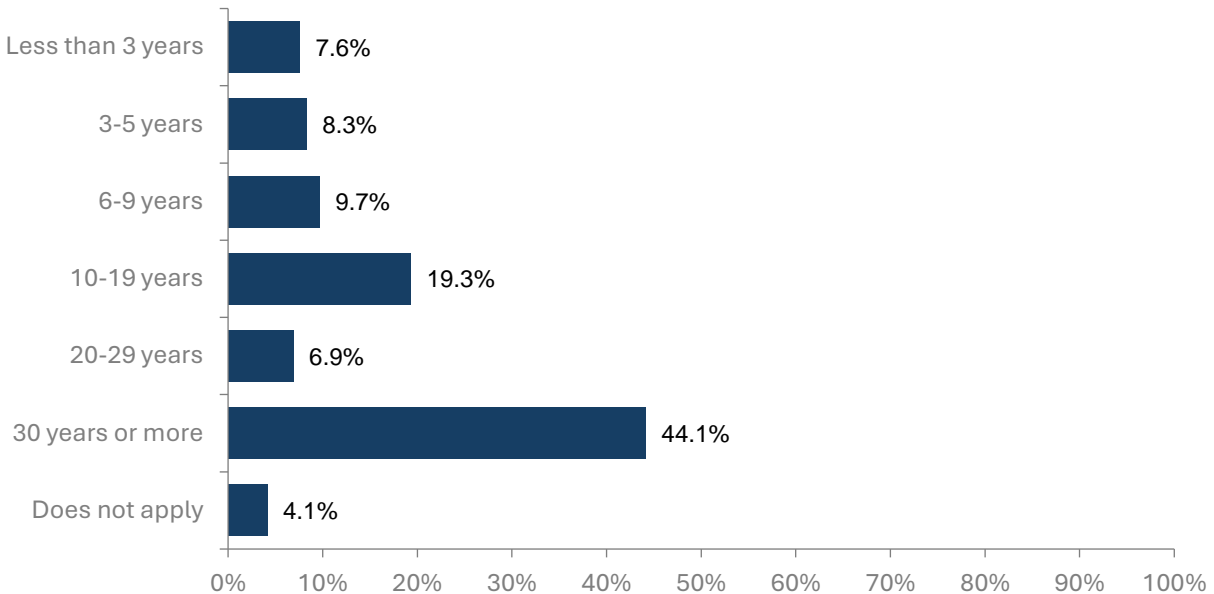


Question 1 asked respondents what their connection to Marathon Township was, and 129 (89.0%) responses showed that they live in the township. Eleven (7.6%) out of the 145 respondents frequently visit the township, and eight (5.5%) respondents are part-time residents. While seven (4.8%) respondents own a business within the township, five (3.5%) respondents also answered that they work within the township, and three (2.1%) live outside of Marathon Township, but within Lapeer County.

Figure X-X: Length of Residency

How long have you lived in the Township of Marathon?

145 responses

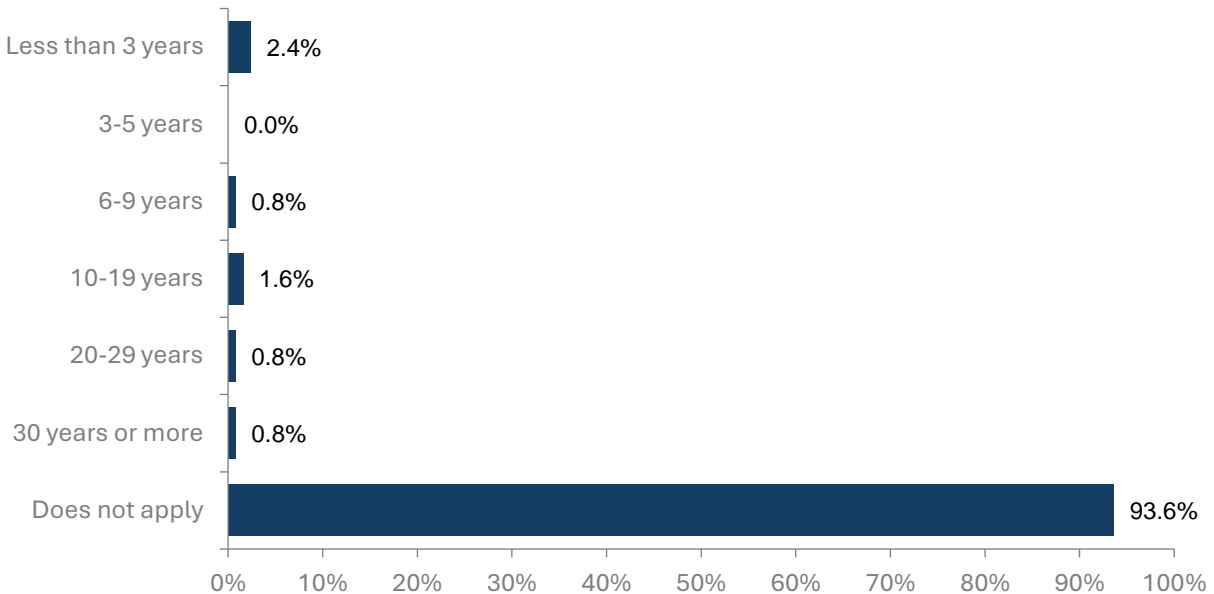


The results of **Question 2** demonstrate that of the 145 responses, most have lived in Marathon Township for 30 years or more, selected by 64 respondents (44.1%). This was followed by 28 (19.3%) respondents selecting the answer between 10 and 19 years. The subsequent frequently chosen range responses were 6-9 Years with 14 responses (9.7%), 3-5 Years (8.3%), and “Less than 3 Years” (7.6%). Lastly, 10 respondents (6.9%) selected the response 20-29 Years. Together, these responses reflect a broad range of residency lengths, from long-term residents to new residents.

Figure X-X: Length of Business

If you have a business in the Township of Marathon, how long have you been here?

125 responses

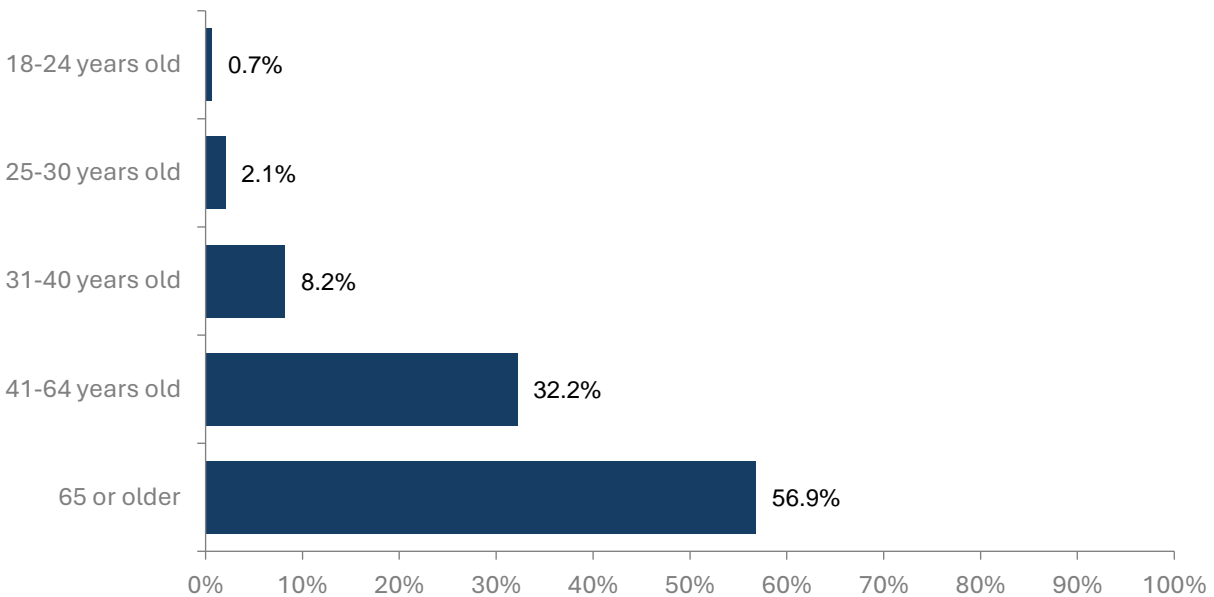


Question 3 gathered information regarding the length of business ownership by respondents who own a business in Marathon Township. The survey data concludes that for business owners of “Less than 3 years”, three (2.4%) responses were received, followed by “10-19 years”, with two (1.6%) responses. One (.8%) response each was received for the following three choices: “6-9 years”, “20-29 years”, and “30 years or more”. Of the 125 responses, 117 (93.6%) responded that it does not apply to them because they do not own a business.

Figure X-X: Age

What is your age?

146 responses

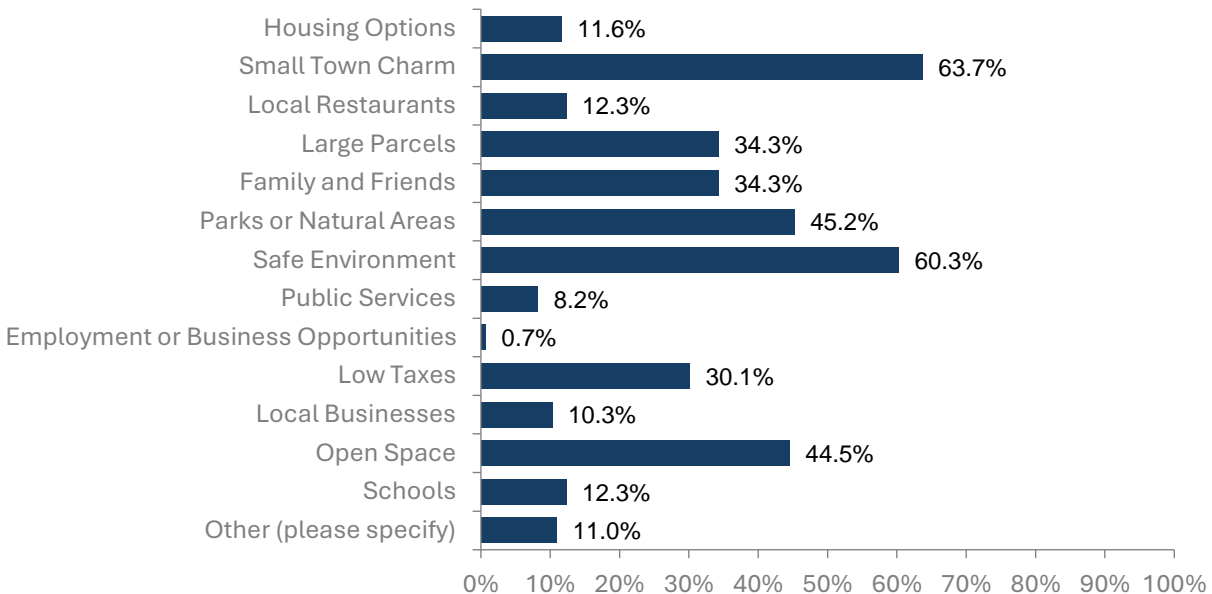


Question 4 collected survey data in which the general age range of survey respondents was indicated. Of the 146 responses, 83 (56.9%) indicated they were 65 and older, while 47 (32.2%) respondents stated they were between the ages of 41 and 64. The third most common age group represented by survey respondents was those 31 to 40, with 12 (8.2%). The following was the age group of 25-30 years, with 3 responses (2.1%), and 18-24 years, with one response (0.7%).

Figure X-X: Most Valued

What do you value the most about living, working, or visiting the Township of Marathon?
(Select all that apply)

146 responses

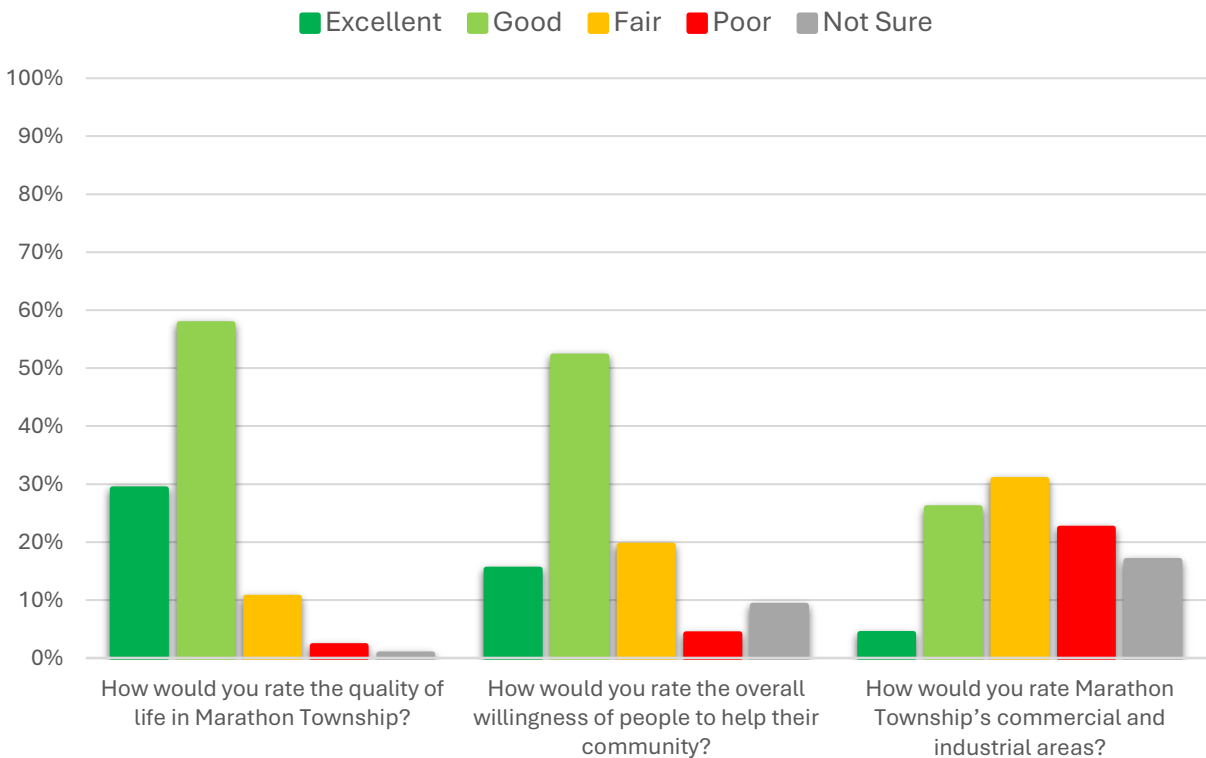


Question 5 gathered information surrounding what items the survey respondents value most about living, working, or visiting Marathon Township. Of the 146 responses, small town charm, with 93 (63.7%) votes, and safe environment, with 88 (60.3%) votes, were selected as being valued the most by Marathon residents. The following five highest-rated options include 66 (45.2%) responses for parks or natural areas, 65 (44.5%) responses for open space, 50 (34.3%) responses for large parcels, 50 (34.3%) responses for family and friends, and 44 (30.1%) responses for low taxes.

Respondents who offered additional comments under the other option included the following: Residents and visitors value Marathon Township for its natural beauty, outdoor recreational opportunities, and peaceful environment. Highlighting items such as the township's access to lakes, streams, the Rail Trail, minimal light pollution, and a strong sense of tranquility. Community resources such as Veterans' Services, the local library, and a vibrant farming presence further enhance the Township's appeal. Many appreciate the freedom from urban congestion and limited government interference, though there are concerns about the proposed solar farm development. Overall, respondents feel that Marathon Township offers an exceptional balance of nature, community, and quality of life.

Figure X-X: Community Ratings

Perception



In **Question 6**, the survey asked respondents to rate several topics related to the perception of Marathon Township as either Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, or Not Sure. The respondents were asked to rate the quality of life in Marathon Township, the overall willingness of people to help their community, and Marathon Township's commercial and industrial areas. The results show that most of the respondents ranked the quality of life in Marathon Township as good. The survey results also ranked the helpfulness of residents as good. Most respondents were either unsure or rated it as "neutral" when it came to commercial and industrial activity within the township.

Question 7 asked survey respondents to provide further details regarding their rating of their community perception from Question 6. If survey respondents answered “Fair” or “Poor” for any of the above options in Question 6, they were asked to briefly describe why. The five common themes of reasons provided by respondents were:

1. Lack of Commercial & Industrial Development

- A significant number of respondents mentioned that there is very little to no commercial or industrial presence in Marathon Township.
- Many noted the absence of basic businesses like grocery stores, restaurants, barber shops, or pharmacies.
- Several respondents pointed out that there are too many empty or outdated buildings, and a few suggested redeveloping areas like North Lake and Columbiaville Road.
- Some feel the lack of business options results in having to travel 30 minutes or more for basic shopping.

2. Mixed Feelings on Growth

- A portion of residents value the quiet, rural nature of the township and are content with minimal development, especially in relation to preserving agriculture, private lakes, and open spaces.
- Others expressed frustration with the lack of amenities, entertainment, and job opportunities, especially for the younger population.

3. Infrastructure Concerns

- Poor road conditions, lack of streetlights, no fire hydrants, and no water service were common concerns.
- Some expressed dissatisfaction with how taxes have increased, without seeing improvements in infrastructure.

4. Community & Involvement

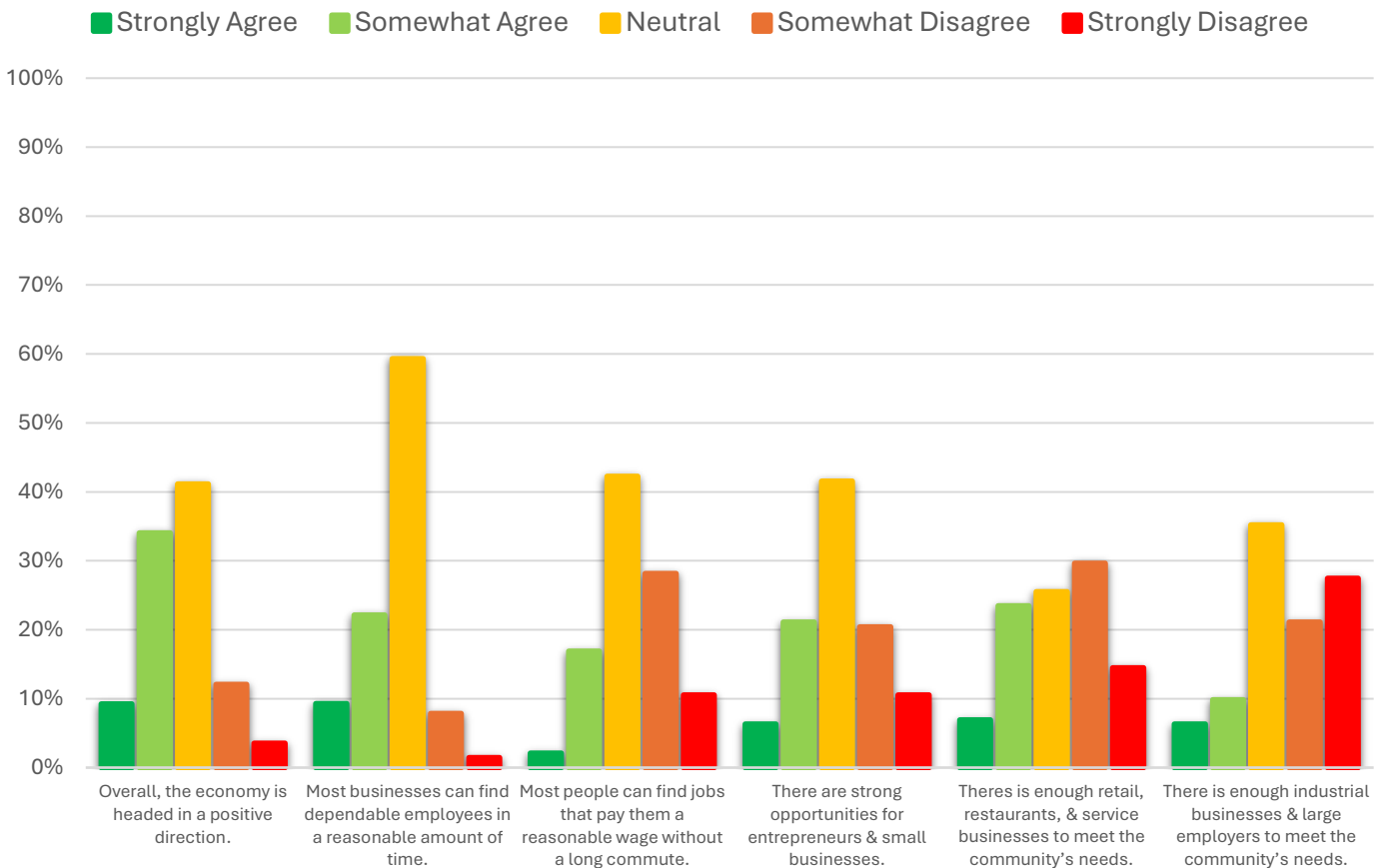
1. Respondents commented on a lack of community engagement, especially among the younger generation.
2. Several mentioned that people are often self-focused and unwilling to volunteer or support others.
3. A few voiced appreciation for the library and post office, but still noted the overall lack of services.

5. Suggestions & Wishes

- Residents suggested the addition of:
 - Restaurants and coffee shops
 - Cooking or BBQ classes
 - Internet improvements
 - Incentives to attract businesses and revitalize commercial properties
- Others noted the need for more awareness and promotion of existing businesses.

Figure X-X: Economy

Economy



In **Question 8**, the survey asked respondents to rate the following statements related to the economy in Marathon Township as either Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neutral, Somewhat Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. The following findings include:

1. Overall, the economy in Marathon Township is headed in a positive direction.
2. Businesses in Marathon Township can find dependable employees in a reasonable amount of time.
3. Most respondents disagree that residents in Marathon Township can find jobs that pay them a reasonable wage without a long commute.
4. There may be strong opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses to start in Marathon Township.
5. There is a general sense of dissatisfaction or inadequacy among respondents when it comes to the existing retail, restaurants, and service businesses meeting the community's needs.
6. Marathon Township should have more industrial businesses and large employers to meet the community's needs.

Question 9 collected written responses from survey respondents on whether there were any desired future businesses or economic activities they wished to see more of in Marathon Township. Based on the responses received, here are the seven most desired businesses or services for Marathon Township:

1. **Medical Services:**

- There is a strong demand for more local medical options, including family doctors, dentists, and general healthcare services. Many residents would like to see local pharmacies and urgent care facilities.

2. **Grocery and Retail Needs:**

- Several respondents request a grocery store with healthier food options, as current choices (like Dollar General) are considered insufficient.
- Hardware stores are also mentioned frequently, with residents desiring more local stores to avoid having to drive out of town for basic supplies.
- Other retail desires include a bakery, a coffee shop, gift shops, and clothing stores.

3. **Restaurants and Food Services:**

- There is a recurring call for more restaurants and fast-food options, with many suggesting a variety of dining choices, including cafes, bars, or family-friendly eateries.
- Some also propose a local brewery or dining establishments by the lake, offering outdoor seating and scenic views.

4. **Recreation and Community Spaces:**

- Respondents express interest in more recreational spaces, such as mini golf, a golf course, or kayak/canoe rentals at the local reservoir.
- There are also suggestions for a community center offering activities like yoga, craft classes, or fitness programs.
- A splash pad for children or other family-oriented recreation options was also mentioned.

5. **Local Infrastructure and Services:**

- Some respondents suggest improving the local infrastructure, including better roads, public transportation (bus services), and internet access.
- Banks, laundry services, and public service facilities such as ambulance services to VA hospitals were also desired.

6. **Specialty and Tourism-Oriented Businesses:**

- Suggestions for unique or tourist-focused businesses include art galleries, local butcher shops, cannabis shops, or event spaces.
- There is also interest in local tourism activities, such as boating, camping, or other outdoor-based businesses, to cater to tourists and residents alike.

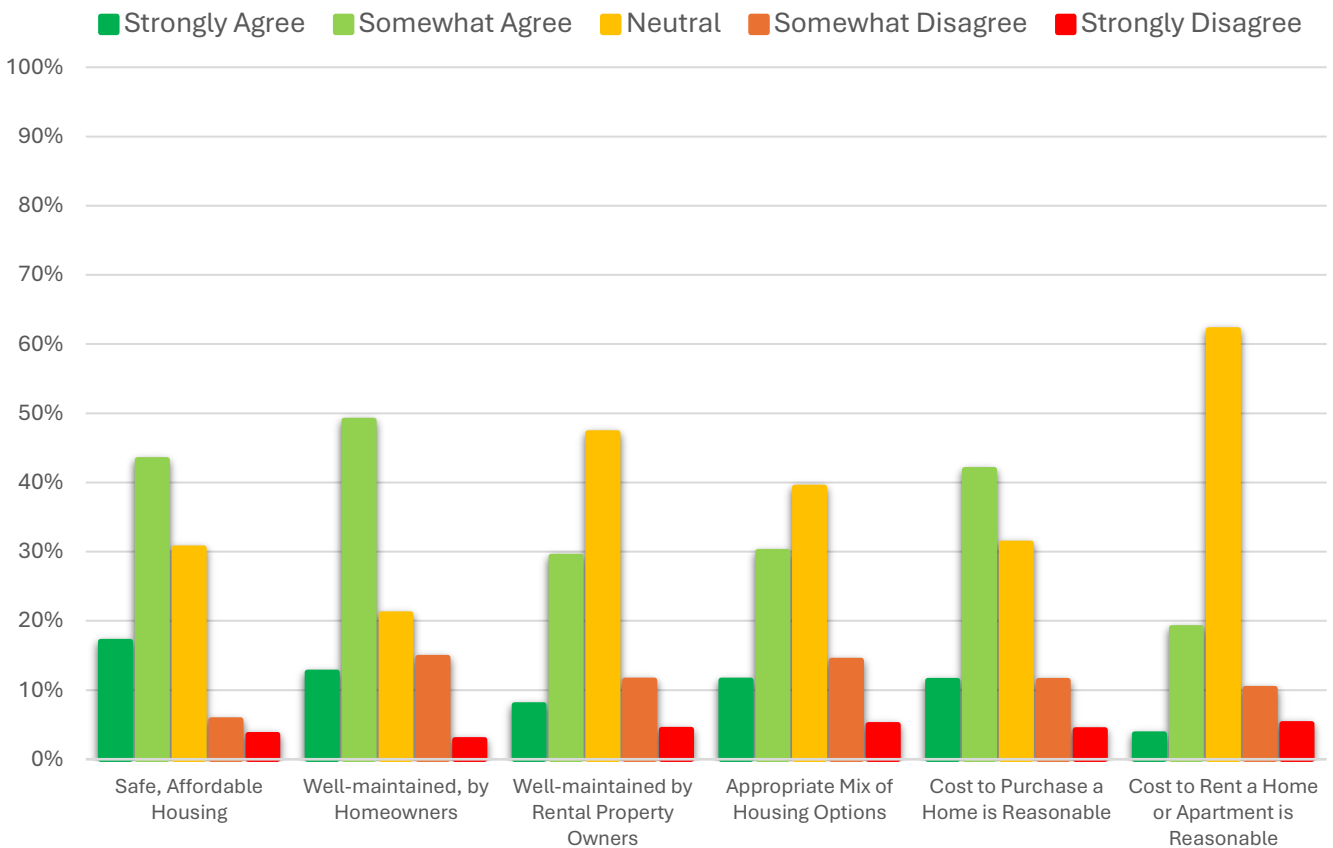
7. **Community Engagement and Activities:**

- Ideas for community-based activities include game nights, family-friendly events, or local festivals to help build a stronger sense of community.

Residents of Marathon Township are calling for more **local services**, including **healthcare**, **grocery stores**, and **recreational options**. However, they are wary of large-scale development and want to preserve the area's rural character. **Community spaces**, **family-friendly entertainment**, and **small local businesses** are seen as key additions that could improve life in the township.

Figure X-X: Housing

Housing



Question 10 asked the survey respondents to rate the following statements related to housing in Marathon Township as either Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neutral, Somewhat Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. The following findings include:

1. Most people and families can find safe, affordable housing that meets their needs in Marathon Township.
2. Houses in Marathon Township are well-maintained, and homeowners are reinvesting in their homes.
3. Houses in Marathon Township are well-maintained, and rental property owners are reinvesting in their homes.
4. Marathon Township has an appropriate mix of housing options (single-family, apartments, senior housing, etc.).
5. The cost to purchase a home in Marathon Township is reasonable.
6. The cost to rent a home or apartment in Marathon Township is somewhat reasonable.

Question 11 provides further information regarding housing and property conditions in Marathon Township. If survey respondents answered “Somewhat Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” for any of the above options in Question 10, they were asked to briefly describe why. The five most common reasons given are listed below:

1. Property Maintenance and Blight:

- Blight and property neglect are significant concerns, with many respondents noting junk in yards, overgrown vegetation, old cars, and poorly maintained properties. This is seen as detracting from the overall appearance of the township and lowering property values.
- Some homes are well-maintained, but there is a need for enforcement of blight ordinances to address neglected properties.
- There is frustration with the lack of pride in some areas and a belief that action needs to be taken to clean up the township.

2. Housing Affordability and Availability:

- Rent prices are generally viewed as too high, making it difficult for many families, particularly those on fixed incomes, to afford housing. Some respondents mention that rent in the area is comparable to larger cities, but the housing quality does not reflect the price.
- There are concerns that the cost of housing is unreasonable for people on limited incomes. Rental properties are often described as poorly maintained or overpriced.
- The lack of affordable rental housing and senior housing options is noted as a problem in the township.

3. Community Pride and Involvement:

- Community pride is seen as insufficient, with many calling for greater participation in maintaining properties and enforcing local ordinances to reduce blight.
- Suggestions include using local resources like a deputy to help enforce blight laws and address properties with excessive junk or disrepair.
- Some respondents suggest cleaning up trash on the roads, improving signage, and making necessary repairs to infrastructure like guardrails and fire hydrants.

4. Concerns About Government Housing and Taxes:

- There is resistance to government-subsidized housing and the high taxes in the area, especially considering the lack of urban amenities like streetlights, city water, and fire hydrants.

5. Desire for Better Housing Options:

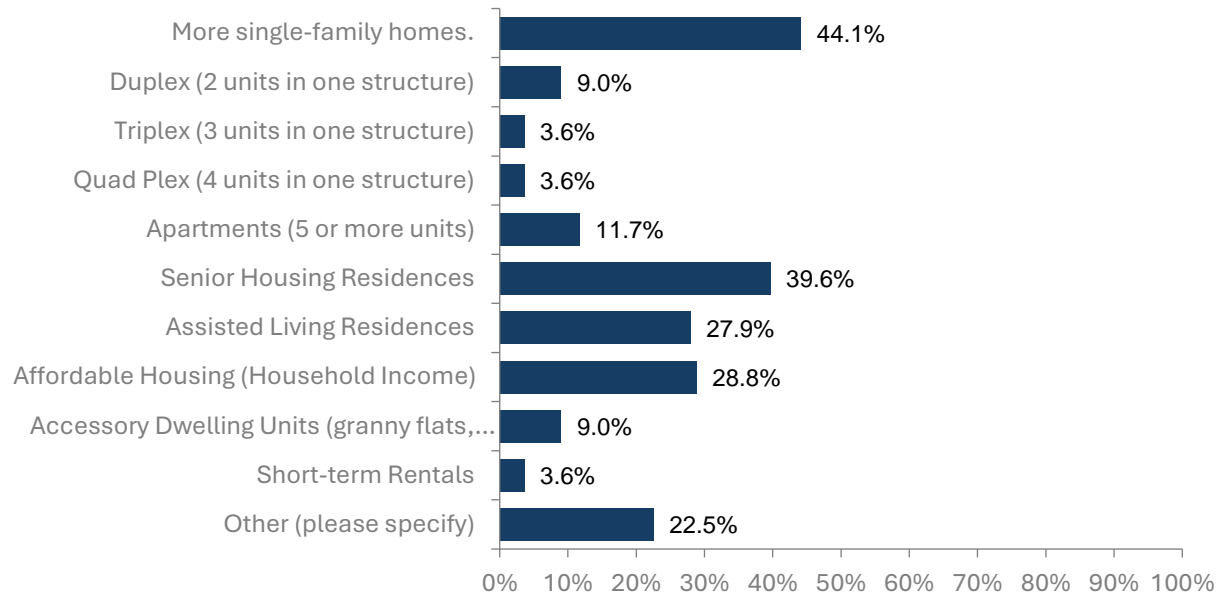
- Some respondents believe there is a need for more housing options beyond single-family homes, including affordable rentals and senior care facilities.
- Lack of apartments in the township is a notable concern, and there is interest in seeing more well-maintained rental properties.

The responses suggest that Marathon Township faces challenges with **property maintenance**, **housing affordability**, and **community pride**. There is a need for stronger enforcement of blight ordinances and action to improve housing options, particularly affordable rentals and senior housing. The high cost of rent and property maintenance, combined with a lack of urban amenities, is a significant concern for residents. Additionally, there is resistance to government-subsidized housing and high local taxes.

Figure X-X: Housing Needs

Is there a specific type of housing that is needed in Marathon Township? (Select all that apply)

111 responses



In **Question 12**, the survey asked respondents to select from the options provided to them if any specific housing types were needed in Marathon Township. Of the 111 responses, more single-family homes received 49 (44.1%) votes. The four most frequently selected housing priorities were Senior Housing with 44 responses (39.6%), Affordable Housing based on household income with 32 responses (28.8%), Assisted Living Residences with 31 responses (27.9%), and "Other" with 25 responses (22.5%). The prevalent themes and responses gathered from the "Other" option are detailed below:

1. General Sentiment on Housing:

- Many respondents feel that there is enough housing already in the township, with a strong desire to preserve the rural character and avoid overcrowding (6 mentions). Some people specifically mention that the township should stay rural and maintain its country feel (3 mentions).
- A few people believe the area has too many people already, and adding more housing would be detrimental (2 mentions).
- Government-subsidized housing is generally opposed, with some people indicating that it is unnecessary for the area (3 mentions).
- There is also a desire for no more housing to be developed in the area (2 mentions).

2. Suggestions for Housing Types:

- Senior housing and assisted living facilities are seen as beneficial due to the aging population in the township (3 mentions).
- Some respondents suggest the idea of converting vacant buildings, like the old rehab facility, into assisted living spaces (1 mention).

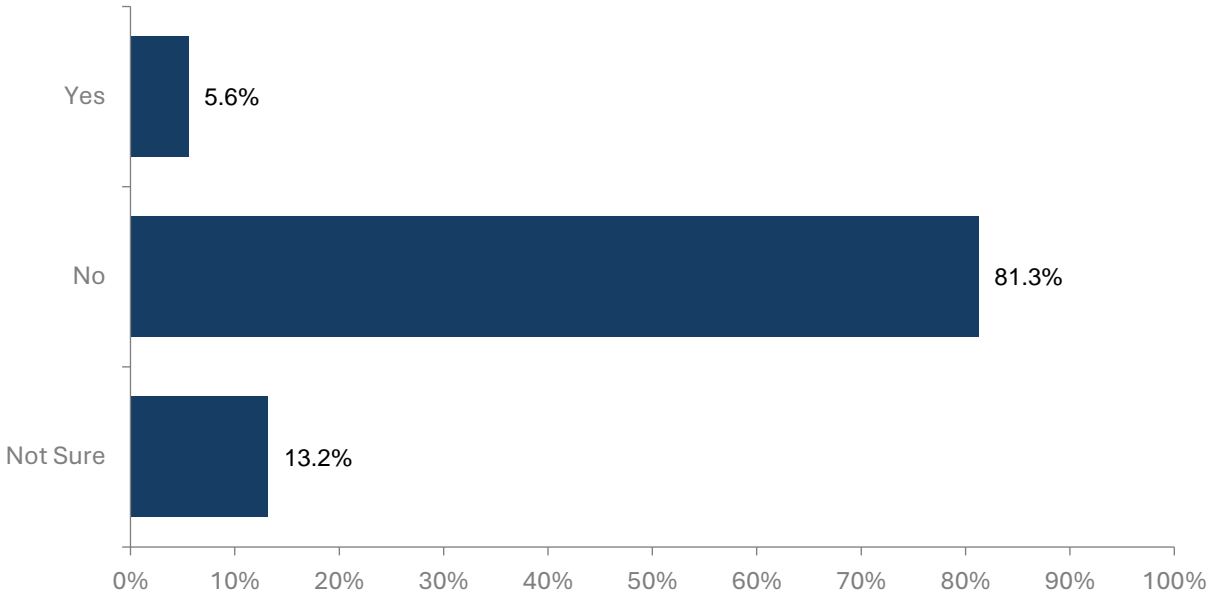
- A few are open to the idea of adding condos or well-maintained properties (2 mentions).
3. **Short-Term Rentals and Other Ideas:**
- Short-term rentals (like Airbnb's) are mentioned as a potential way to bring in income and attract tourists to the area (2 mentions).
 - There is a suggestion for rehabbing properties and developing new businesses to help the area (2 mentions).
 - Some are also in favor of accessory dwelling units, like granny flats or apartments above garages (1 mention).
4. **Internet Access:**
- A lack of high-speed internet is noted as a major barrier to attracting new residents and businesses, suggesting it is a necessity for future development (1 mention).

The responses indicate a strong preference for maintaining the **rural charm** of Marathon Township and **limiting additional housing** development. There is support for **senior housing** and **assisted living** options to cater to the aging population, but resistance to **more government-subsidized or large-scale housing projects**. There are also calls for improving **internet access** and possibly utilizing **vacant buildings** for housing purposes. Additionally, **short-term rentals** are seen as a way to boost the local economy by attracting tourists.

Figure X-X: ____

Do you intend to move out of Marathon Township in the next two (2) years?

144 responses

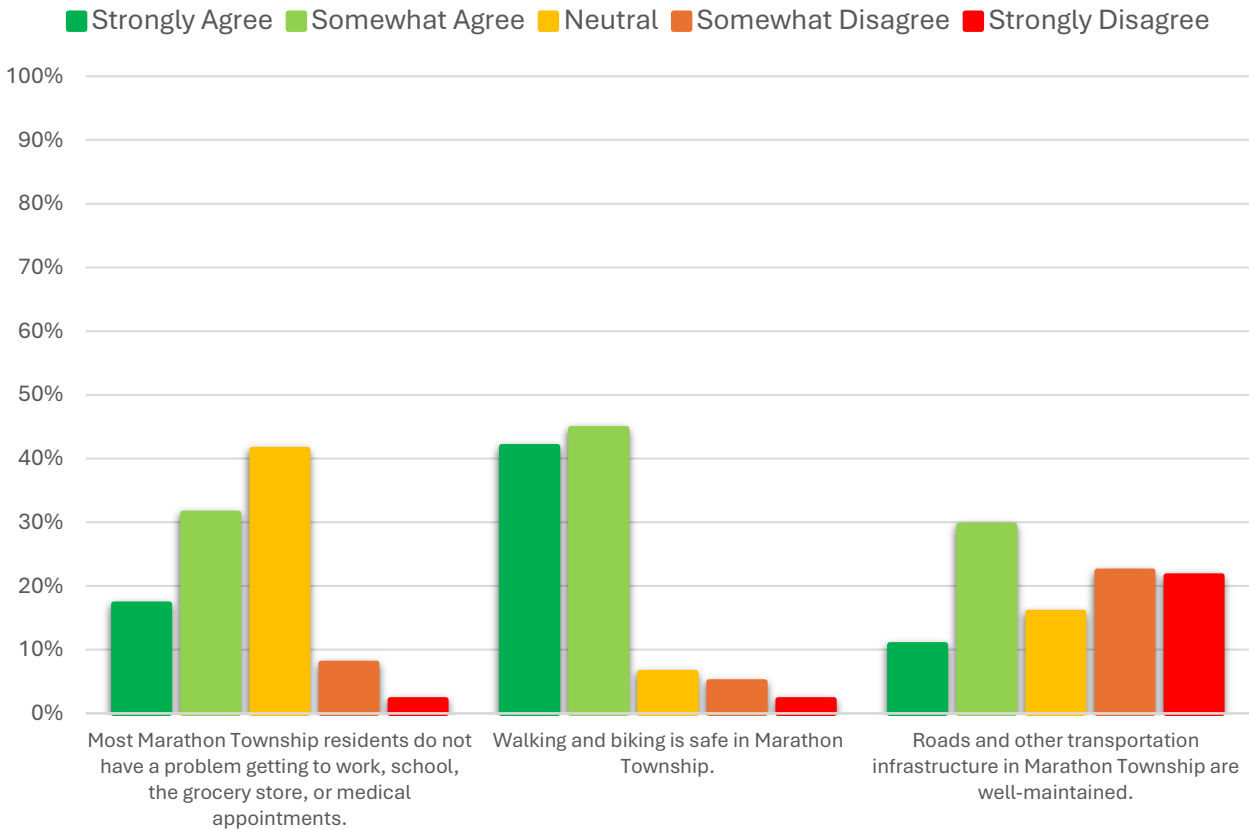


Question 13 asked survey respondents if they intend to move out of Marathon Township in the next two years. Of the 144 responses, 117 (81.3%) respondents selected the answer “No,” 19 (13.2%) selected “Not Sure,” and only 8 (5.6%) selected “Yes.” The data demonstrates that most respondents intend to stay within the township over the next two years. Furthermore, this question asked respondents who indicated intentions of moving out of Marathon Township to provide their reasoning. The responses collected regarding resident sentiment on relocation are listed below:

1. High or rising taxes were frequently mentioned as a primary concern.
2. Some feel their homes are too large or unmanageable as they age.
3. A few noted poor property maintenance in the area as a frustration (e.g., neighbors’ trash or yard conditions).
4. Others expressed dissatisfaction with lack of local amenities such as grocery stores, doctors, or businesses, making daily life inconvenient.
5. A handful mentioned potential developments (like solar farms or cannabis facilities) as possible reasons to leave.
6. Aging or health concerns were also mentioned, particularly by older residents, unsure of how long they’ll remain in their current homes.

Figure X-X: Transportation

Transportation



In **Question 14**, the survey asked respondents to rate the following statements related to transportation in Marathon Township as either Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neutral, Somewhat Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. The following findings include:

1. Most Marathon Township residents do not have a problem getting to work, school, the grocery store, or medical appointments.
2. Walking and biking is safe in Marathon Township.
3. Roads and other transportation infrastructure in Marathon Township are NOT well-maintained.

Question 15 asked survey respondents to provide further information based on their rating of road conditions and transportation concerns in Marathon Township from Question 14. If survey respondents answered “Somewhat Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” for any of the above options in Question 14, they were asked to briefly describe why. The three most common reasons are listed below:

1. Road Conditions:

- Potholes are frequently mentioned as a major issue, with many respondents pointing out the terrible state of local roads, particularly Columbiaville Road, Marathon Road, and various gravel roads. Potholes are described as damaging vehicles and creating dangerous driving conditions (13 mentions).
- Specific roads like Columbiaville Road, Marathon Road, Peters Road, and LeValley Road are frequently cited as being in desperate need of repair (9 mentions).
- Dirt roads are highlighted as poorly maintained, with complaints about dust and lack of grading, especially on roads like Barnes Lake Road (5 mentions).
- Poor winter maintenance is noted, with concerns about roads not being plowed or salted in a timely manner, particularly for gravel roads (3 mentions).
- Safety hazards are mentioned due to poorly maintained roads, with one specific comment about Klam Road and Columbiaville Road being dangerous to drive on (3 mentions).

2. Transportation Issues:

- There are no public transportation options, making it difficult for homebound individuals or those without vehicles to get around (3 mentions).
- Bus services are mentioned as inadequate, with calls for cross-county services for medical appointments (2 mentions).
- Loose dogs are also a recurring issue, with some respondents expressing concern about being approached or attacked by stray dogs (2 mentions).

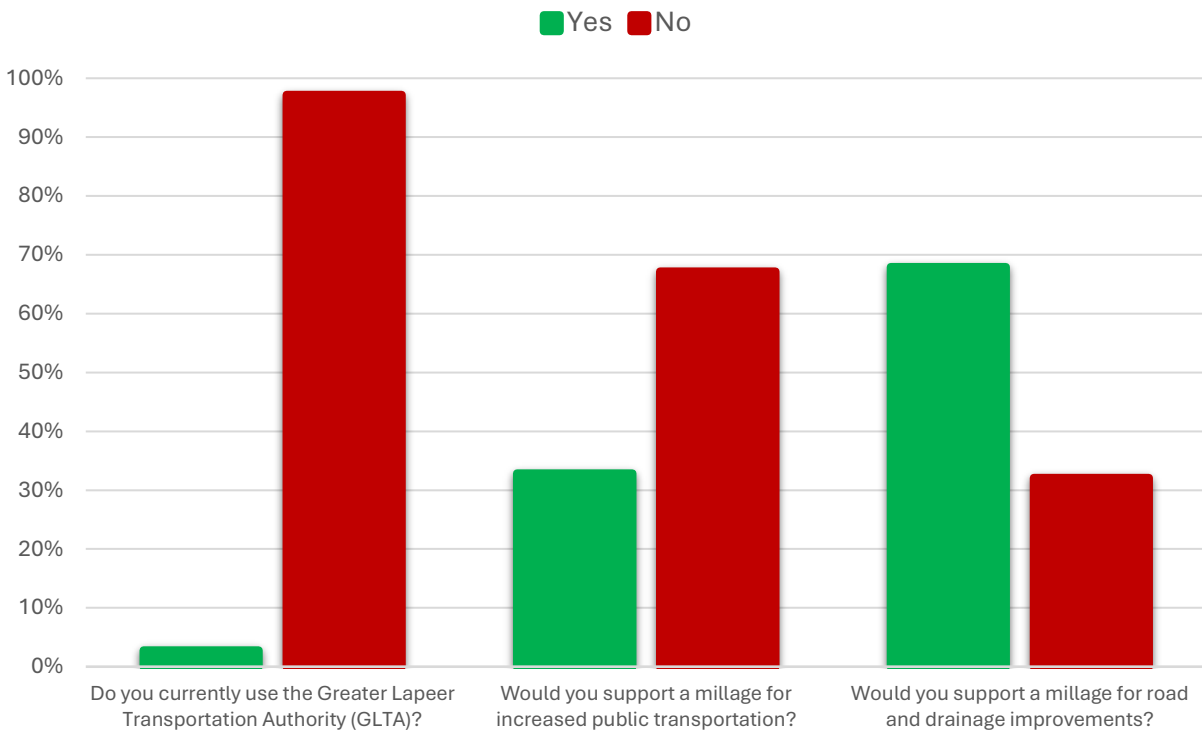
3. Additional Concerns:

- Some residents are concerned about speeding on certain roads, such as Barnes Lake Road, and the need for lower speed limits (1 mention).
- Requests for more regular maintenance of dirt roads and better grading to improve road conditions (1 mention).
- Calls for improving the aesthetics of the area, such as painting safety bollards and improving signage around the township (1 mention).

The primary concern in the responses is the **poor state of the roads**, especially the **lack of maintenance**, **potholes**, and the absence of **public transportation** options for those in need. Many people also voiced concerns about **speeding** on certain roads and **loose dogs** causing safety issues. There is a strong call for **more consistent maintenance** and **public transportation options** to improve accessibility and safety in the area.

Figure X-X: Public Transportation

Public Transportation



In **Question 16**, the survey asked respondents to answer either “yes” or “no” to the following questions related to public transportation in Marathon Township. The following findings include:

1. No, the majority of respondents do not currently use the Greater Lapeer Transportation Authority (GLTA).
2. No, most respondents would not support a millage for increased public transportation.
3. Yes, most respondents would support a millage for road and drainage improvements.

Question 17 asked survey respondents if either they or their family uses the GLTA and how frequently. Most of the respondents said that they do not use the GLTA, mainly because it does not extend its services to their location; however, they would if they had the option. Comments provided by survey respondents regarding their usage and awareness of the GLTA include:

1. **Low overall usage:**

- Many respondents said they do not use GLTA or have never used it.
- Some were unaware it was available in their area, such as on Otter Lake Road.
- A few mentioned it is not available or doesn't currently service their area.

2. **Comments from Users**

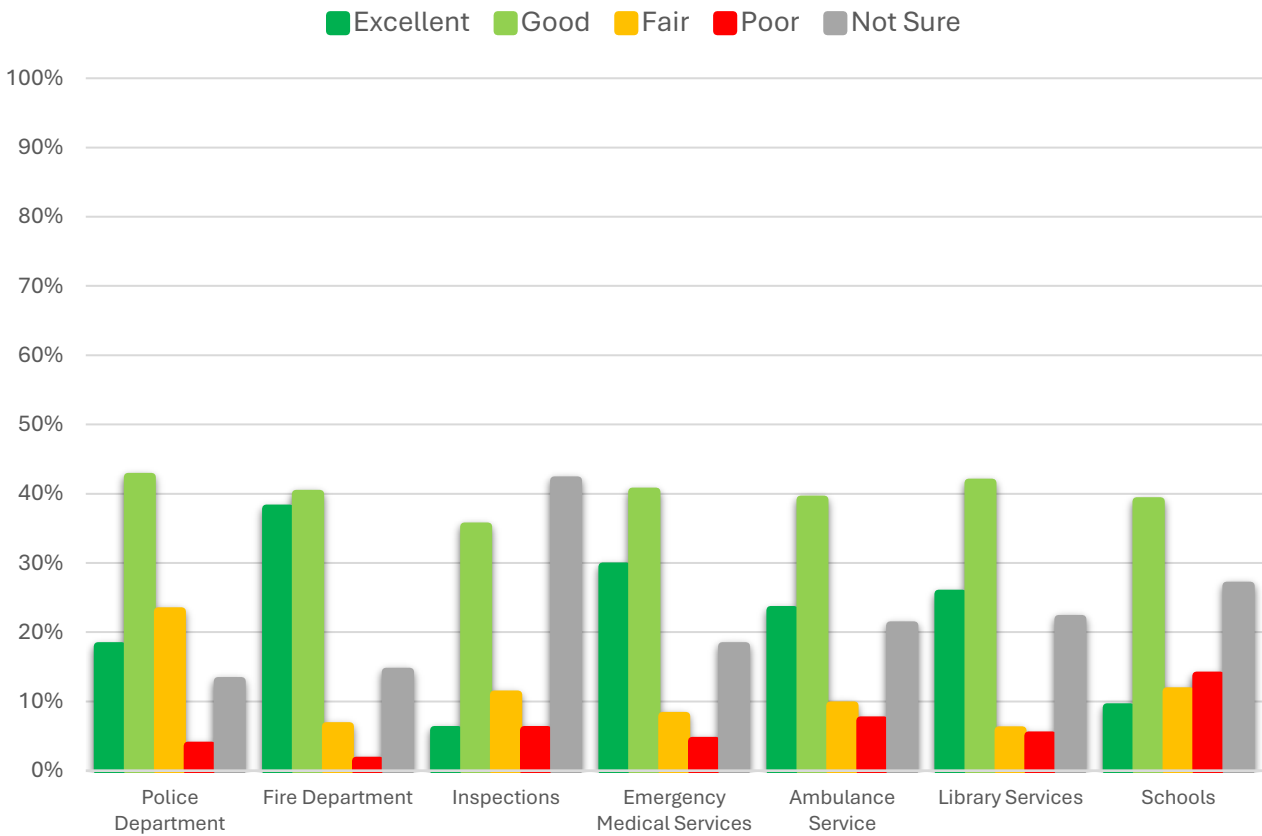
- A small number of residents use GLTA for:
 - Dialysis appointments (3–4 times/week).
 - Work commutes (e.g., one resident's son uses it regularly).
- Some noted difficulty in accessing the service or getting it to extend far enough into rural areas.
- Cost concerns were raised:
 - One resident cited \$35 one-way to Lapeer, making it unaffordable for most.

3. **Barriers to Use**

- Limited-service area and lack of awareness are major obstacles.
- Others refused service outright or said "no" to more taxes for transit expansion.

Figure X-X: Community Services

How would you rate the following community services?



In **Question 18**, the survey asked respondents to rate a list of Marathon Township community services as either Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, or Not Sure. Many respondents believe the township's community services are good. However, the respondents were unsure how to rate some services, like Inspections and Schools.

Additionally, because school districts and experiences vary within a community, the respondents were asked to include the school district pertinent to them. Among the responses, the three school districts mentioned include:

1. Lakeville Community Schools (44 responses 91.67%)
2. North Branch Area Schools (2 responses 4.17%)
3. Lapeer Community Schools (1 response 2.08%)

Question 19 asked survey respondents to provide further information based on their rating of community services in Question 18. If survey respondents answered “Fair” or “Poor” for any of the above options in Question 18, they were asked to briefly describe why. The most common sentiments provided by respondents were:

1. **Police Services:**

- Mixed opinions: Some respondents express frustration with slow police response times, particularly in rural areas where coverage is limited (5 mentions).
- Lack of police presence is a common complaint, with many stating they rarely see officers unless they specifically call (4 mentions).
- Police response time is generally considered slower due to location (5 mentions).
- Some respondents highlight harassment or incompetence in police interactions (3 mentions).

2. **Ambulance & Medical Services:**

- Ambulance delays are a recurring concern, with response times ranging from 40 minutes to 1.5 hours (5 mentions).
- Complaints about high costs of EMS services and poor experiences at local hospitals (4 mentions).

3. **School System:**

- Many are significantly dissatisfied with Lakeville School District, with several responses citing poor performance, issues with behavior, and low test scores (7 mentions).
- Complaints about the curriculum, lack of quality teachers, and bullying are frequent (4 mentions).
- Some respondents are dissatisfied with leadership in sports and funding allocation (1 mention).
- Some respondents opt to school of choice in nearby districts like Lapeer due to dissatisfaction with Lakeville (4 mentions).
- Declining enrollment is also noted as a trend (1 mention).

4. **Fire Department & Emergency Services:**

- Fire services are generally seen positively, with praise for local EMS staff but criticism of outdated equipment and the need for better funding (4 mentions).
- Lack of fire hydrants in some areas and general disrepair of public safety infrastructure (1 mention).

5. **Community Concerns:**

- Lack of community activities and poor communication about local events (1 mention).
- Calls for more community involvement and faster responses from emergency services.

6. **Miscellaneous Complaints:**

- Slow inspections and unprofessional behavior from inspectors (2 mentions).
- **Insufficient library services:** One respondent mentioned a lack of a library in Columbiaville and the absence of good services (3 mentions).

There are widespread concerns about **public services** in the area, especially **police response times**, **ambulance delays**, and **school performance**. The **Lakeville school district** is a primary target of dissatisfaction, with calls for improvement in educational quality and resources. Additionally, there's a need for greater **community involvement** and **faster response times** from local services like police and EMS.

Do you feel like streetlights at intersections would be an improvement? If so, which intersections?

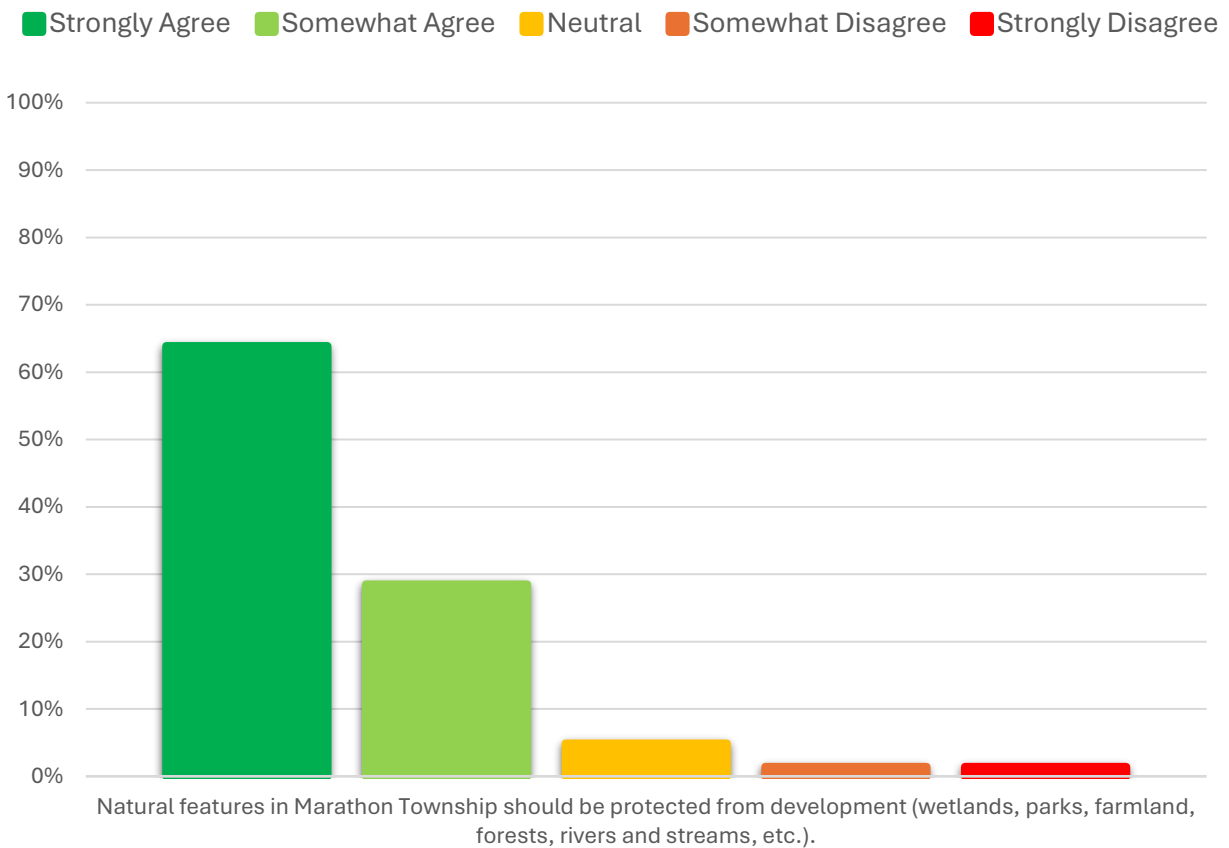
Based on the responses to the above **Question 20**, the overall general sentiment provided by survey respondents includes:

- **Mixed opinions on the need for streetlights and traffic signals:**
 - Yes: Several responses support adding streetlights or traffic signals for safety, particularly at major intersections or problem areas like Hollenbeck & North Lake, Columbiaville & North Lake, Otter Lake & Marathon Road, and Fostoria & Otter Lake Road (22 mentions).
 - No: A significant number of responses oppose adding more streetlights or signals, with reasons ranging from sufficiency of current infrastructure to concerns about wasteful spending (18 mentions).
- **Preferred Locations for Streetlights or Traffic Signals:**
 - Several intersections are mentioned where improvements are needed:
 - Hollenbeck & North Lake, Columbiaville & Washburn, Otter Lake & North Lake (8 mentions).
 - Columbiaville & County Line, Barnes Lake Rd & 24, Pyles & North Lake (4 mentions).
 - Other notable intersections: Washburn & Hollenbeck, North Lake & Columbiaville Road, Fostoria Road & Otter Lake Road (multiple mentions).
- **Key Points:**
 - Concerns about Brightness: If new streetlights are installed, some respondents suggest that lights should be amber and shielded to avoid disturbing neighboring properties (1 mention).
 - Streetlights at all Intersections: A few respondents propose having streetlights at all major intersections for added safety (3 mentions).
 - No Need for More: Many responses indicate that there are already enough streetlights and traffic signals in place and oppose adding more (7 mentions).

There is a split in the community regarding the need for more streetlights and traffic signals. While some feel certain intersections could benefit from improvements for safety reasons, others are satisfied with the current infrastructure and believe additional lights or signals would be unnecessary or a waste of resources.

Figure X-X: Environment

Environment



In **Question 21**, the survey asked respondents to rate the following statement related to the environment in Marathon Township as either Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neutral, Somewhat Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. The following findings include:

1. Natural Features in Marathon Township (wetlands, parks, farmland, forests, rivers and streams, etc.) should be protected from development.

Question 22 asked survey respondents to provide further information behind their rating of the environment in Marathon Township from Question 21. If survey respondents answered “Somewhat Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” for any of the above options in Question 21, they were asked to briefly describe why. A summary of the three most common responses, along with additional key points provided by respondents, is listed below:

1. Supportive of protection/preservation: 8 responses (~57%)

- Emphasis on maintaining parks, forests, rivers, farmland, and rural character.
- Strong concern about light pollution, overdevelopment, and clean natural spaces.
- Preference for preservation over new development (e.g., solar/wind farms).
 - *"I don't think any of our nature should be replaced with development except better preservation."*
 - *"We need all farmed land/forest/river/streams to stay and be maintained."*

2. Skeptical or conditional support: 4 responses (~29%)

- Support only if maintenance is ensured or limited to municipal property.
- Concerns over government overreach and ineffective or costly regulations.
 - *"Telling residential private property owners what they can/can't do on their own land is an overreach."*
 - *"As long as they are being maintained."*

3. Opposed to labeling farmland as “natural” or protection policies: 3 responses (~21%)

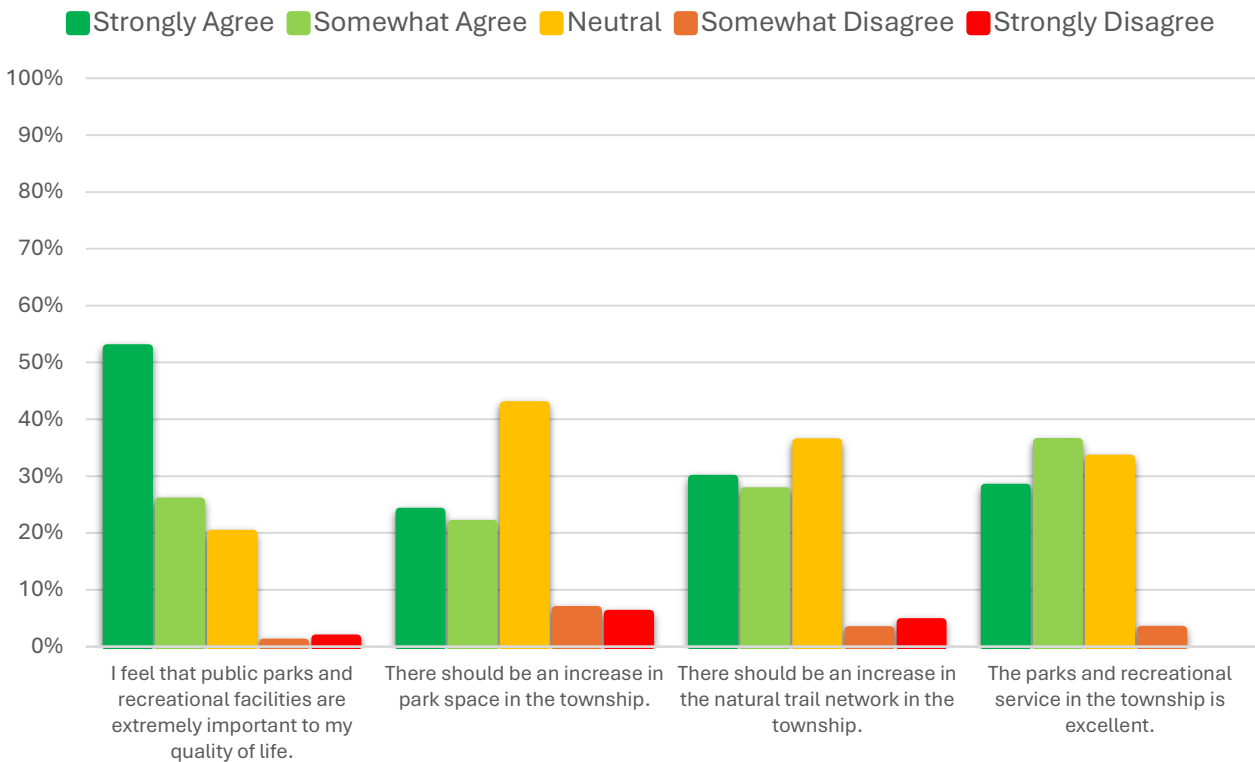
- Disagreement that farmland qualifies as a natural feature.
- Critique of economic inefficiency of some protected land.
 - *"Farmland is not a natural feature."*
 - *"Most of it produces little in terms of economic value."*

4. Other Key Points

- Some desire **collaboration between communities** (Columbiaville & Marathon).
- Concerns about **light pollution** and desire for **dark-sky protections**.
- One respondent noted they hadn't visited recent park improvements.

Figure X-X: Parks

Parks



In **Question 23**, the survey asked respondents to rate the following statements related to the Parks in Marathon Township as either Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neutral, Somewhat Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. The following findings include:

1. Respondents feel that public parks and recreational facilities are extremely important to their quality of life.
2. While many are neutral, support for increasing park space significantly outweighs opposition.
3. There should be an increase in the nature trail network in the township.
4. Most respondents feel that the parks and recreational services in the township are excellent.

What is your favorite park or recreational area in the township?

Based on the responses to the above **Question 24**, here are the top ten parks or recreational areas noted by survey respondents in Marathon Township:

1. Southern Links Trailway (Rail Trail)
2. Marathon Township Park
3. Zemmer Park
4. Holloway Reservoir
5. Otter Lake Village Campgrounds
6. Tibbits Nature Sanctuary
7. Veterans Park
8. Klam Road Fishing Site
9. Boat Launch
10. Lapeer State Game Area

What is your favorite amenity at the park or recreational area in the township?

Based on the responses to the above **Question 25**, here are the top twelve amenities featured at parks or recreational areas noted by respondents in Marathon Township:

1. Walking/Biking Trails: 32 mentions (~40%)
2. Peace and Quiet/Nature: 9 mentions (~11%)
3. Fishing: 7 mentions (~9%)
4. Picnic Areas (Tables): 6 mentions (~8%)
5. Trails with Scenic Views: 5 mentions (~6%)
6. Rest Areas and Pavilions: 5 mentions (~6%)
7. Boating (Boat Docks/Launch): 4 mentions (~5%)
8. Children's Playgrounds: 3 mentions (~4%)
9. Bathrooms/Restrooms: 3 mentions (~4%)
10. Water Access: 3 mentions (~4%)
11. Bike Facilities: 3 mentions (~4%)
12. Youth Opportunities/Facilities: 1 mention (~1%)

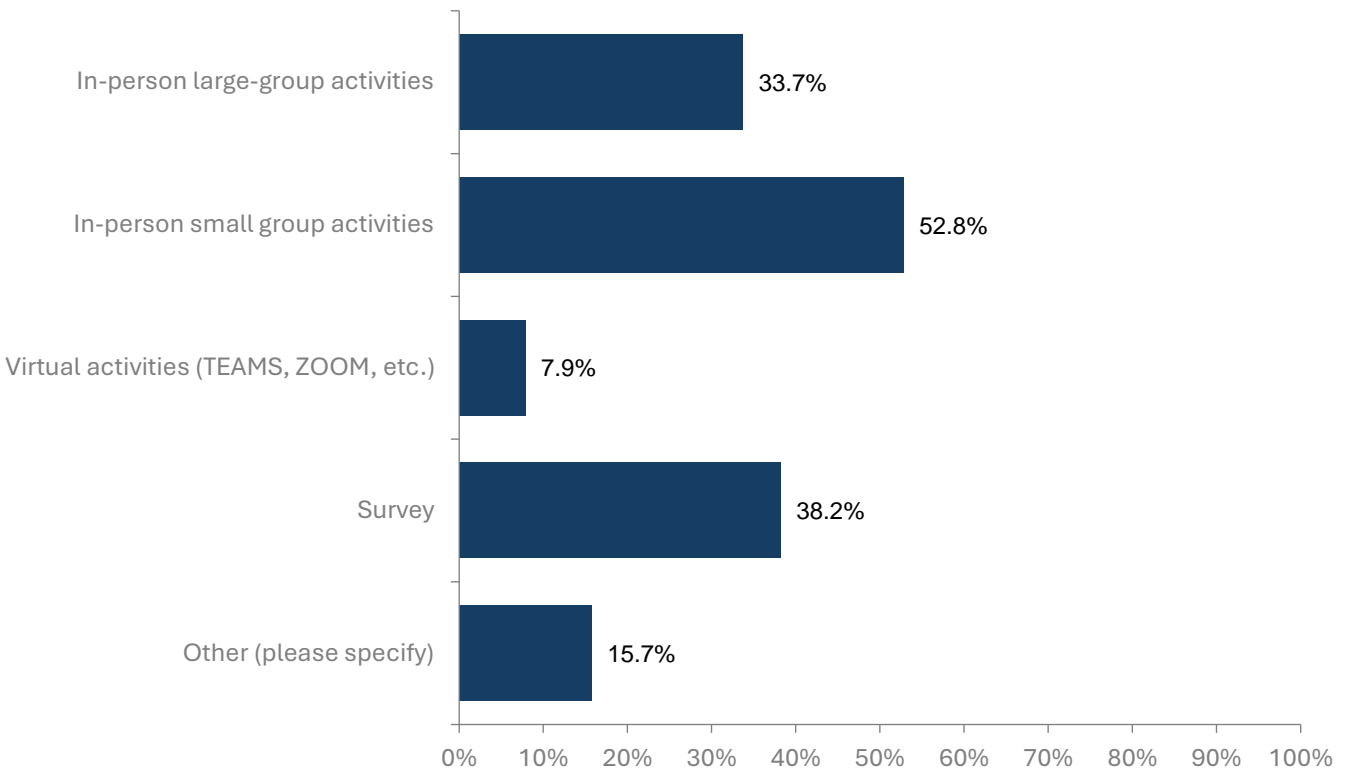
What additional park/recreational amenities would you like to see?

Based on the responses to the above **Question 26**, here are the top park/recreational amenities desired by respondents for Marathon Township:

1. **Tennis/Pickleball/Basketball Courts:** 2 mentions
2. **Disc Golf Course:** 2 mentions
3. **Mini Golf:** 1 mention
4. **Children's Play Areas (Treehouse, Better Playground):** 4 mentions
5. **Concerts, Shows, and Events:** 2 mentions
6. **More Trails/Pathways:** 7 mentions (including hiking and biking trails)
7. **Improved/Additional Boat Launches (Canoe/Kayak):** 6 mentions
8. **More Picnic Areas, Tables, Shelters:** 5 mentions
9. **Better Bathroom Facilities:** 2 mentions
10. **Beach and Waterfront Areas:** 5 mentions (including lifeguarded beach, more beaches on the reservoir)
11. **Waste Management and Trash Pickup:** 2 mentions
12. **Dog-Friendly Areas (Dog Beach, Dog Park, Dog Trails):** 2 mentions
13. **Improved Accessibility and Facilities for Disabled Individuals:** 1 mention (e.g., handicap-accessible kayak launch)
14. **Community Events (e.g., Easter Egg Hunt, Farmers Market):** 1 mention
15. **Nature Sanctuaries and Rural, Wooded Areas:** 2 mentions
16. **Water Stations and Drinking Fountains:** 2 mentions
17. **Increased Safety/Lighting for Trails:** 1 mention

Figure X-X: Public Engagement

Public Engagement Activities



Question 27 asked the survey respondents to select which types of public engagement activities they would be likely to participate in. Of the 89 responses, the top three responses include 47 (52.8%) votes for “In-person small-group activities”, 34 (38.2%) votes for “Surveys, and 30 (33.7%) votes for “In-person large-group activities”.

In **Question 28**, survey respondents were asked to provide any additional comments. Based on the survey responses, a summary of the comments and concerns is provided below:

1. **Government and Services:**

- Rude interactions with Village Office: A complaint regarding poor customer service (1 mention).
- Lack of Trash Pickup: Request for trash collection, highlighting its absence compared to other townships (1 mention).
- Unclear Taxation and Drainage Issues: Concerns over taxation and the ongoing assessments related to drainage and the Lapeer Drain Commission (2 mentions).
- Road Maintenance: Multiple complaints about roads, specifically poor conditions of Columbiaville Road, Fostoria, North Lake Road, and the general state of township roads (5 mentions).
- Water Quality Issues: Concern about non-drinkable water with high chemical content (1 mention).

2. **Community and Local Identity:**

- Support for Local Community Events: Desire for more holiday-related activities (Christmas, Halloween) and events like Columbiaville Days, food truck events, and the continuation of local traditions (6 mentions).
- Desire for Low Growth and Rural Preservation: Preference for maintaining the rural atmosphere with less development and avoiding large-scale projects like solar farms or windmills (3 mentions).
- Support for Local Libraries: Request for more support for the Lapeer District Library branches (1 mention).
- Community Safety: Positive sentiment about the low crime rate and peaceful nature of the town (2 mentions).

3. **Business and Infrastructure:**

- Need for More Businesses: Requests for more businesses and development, particularly around the waterway areas, like Columbiaville and Otter Lake (3 mentions).
- Support for Local Infrastructure: Concerns over the adequacy of internet access, road repair, and fire hydrant maintenance (3 mentions).

4. **Other Concerns:**

- Tax Increases and Small Business Impact: Complaints about tax increases potentially driving small businesses away from the area (2 mentions).
- Master Plan Terminology: A suggestion to reconsider using the term “Master Plan” due to negative associations (1 mention).

The feedback highlights frustration with poor road conditions, unresponsive government services, and high taxes, especially concerning drainage assessments and the lack of trash collection. There's a desire for community engagement through local events and activities, but also a strong sentiment for maintaining the town's rural and peaceful character. Residents generally feel safe but are concerned about the potential for overdevelopment and tax burdens on businesses. Water quality and lack of high-speed internet are also significant issues.