

## HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP RESIDENT SURVEY 2005 RESULTS

### INTRODUCTION

In 1988, Highland Township distributed a survey designed to elicit resident feedback on existing and future land use and local government services. The survey was one tool used to update the community's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, and has been used to guide decision makers in programming capital expenditures.

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan ("Master Plan") documents the community's vision for the future. While the Plan is an important foundation, it is not fixed and inflexible. The Plan must be reviewed and refined periodically to ensure that it accurately reflects community attitudes and goals, current development trends, and embraces the best practices for stewardship of our natural, cultural and other community resources. In fact, state law now dictates that each community reviews its Master Plan documents at least once every five years.

After thoughtful consideration, the Highland Township Planning Commission drafted a survey form similar to that used in 1988, modified only to address some new concepts/trends in land use and governing and the formation of our local conservancy groups. Otherwise, the form and wording of the questions was preserved. The Planning Commission also included an "open-ended" questionnaire where residents could share such thoughts as the best and worst examples of development during the last seven years.

The surveys were mailed to approximately 25 percent of all households, evenly spread across the Township. For instance, one out of every four addresses for each subdivision, condominium development, apartment complex or mobile home park was selected for inclusion in the mailing list. Acreage parcels were also included. Every household had an equal opportunity to receive a survey.

	2005*	1998
Total Number of Households	7336	5933
Number of Surveys Mailed	2167	1527
Non-Deliverable surveys	18	38
Surveys returned and tallied	686	767
% Return	31.9%	51.5%

\*SEMCOG estimate

We note that the land use survey of 1998 was part of an organized public education campaign intent on raising awareness of the master plan project. The 2006 survey was mailed with less fanfare. The 31.9% return represents approximately nine percent of the total households and is deemed to be statistically significant.

## DATA COMPILATION

The pages that follow include tabular and graphic comparisons of the results of the 1998 and 2005 surveys. Where demographic information is available on a Township-wide basis (i.e. 2000 census or Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) estimates), that data is also provided for comparison.

Single family homeowners, college graduates and households earning more than \$75,000 per year participated in greater percentages than would be expected in a representative Township-wide sampling. This may indicate that the respondents have a greater expectation that their opinions can help shape the future based on their educational and economic status.

The 2005 respondents tended to be somewhat older than the 1998 respondents, with the majority falling in the 41 to 60 year age group. The data regarding length of residency in Highland Township did not vary significantly from 1998 to 2005, with approximately 38% of the respondents reporting residency exceeding 20 years. Again, this may imply that residents who have lived in Highland longest have a greater “investment” in the community and are willing to get involved in planning for the future.

Overall, a review of the demographic information from the surveys suggest that the results provide a valid snapshot of public opinion.

