

# Watab Township Community Survey

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## **Introduction to the Watab Township Community Survey**

In the summer of 2005, the Watab Township Board of Supervisors secured the professional services of the Region Five Development Commission to conduct a township-wide community survey. Rather than a limited sampling of property owners, the Township Board chose to submit a survey questionnaire to all 1,184 property owners on record with the Benton County Assessor's Office. The Watab Township Community Survey yielded an excellent overall response rate with nearly 43% or 507 of 1,184 property owners responding to the survey.

### **Important Note on Survey Data**

It is important to note that all percentages corresponding with these findings are calculated based on the collected responses of all survey participants who indicated a response for that particular question on the survey questionnaire and that not all answers will add to 100% due to rounding and missing responses.

## **1.0 General Questions**

### **1.1. Residency**

Respondents were asked to indicate their residency status or business ownership within the Township according to one of the four following classifications:

- 1 Permanent Resident (Reside in Township over 6 months out of the year)
- 2 Seasonal Resident (Reside in Township under 6 months out of the year)
- 3 Recreational Resident (Dwelling primarily for recreation, weekends, etc.)
- 4 Business Owner (Own or operate a business within the Township)

The vast majority of all property owners responding to the survey reported themselves as permanent residents with 89% reporting as such. Six percent of survey respondents identified themselves as owners of business within the Township. Table 1.1 provides a distribution of survey respondents by the status of residency.

**Table 1.1: Residency Status Reported by Respondents**

<b>Type of Residency</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
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Permanent	452	89%
Seasonal	11	2%
Recreational	29	6%
Business Owner <sup>1</sup>	30	6%

<sup>1</sup> Respondents to the survey had the option of selecting “Business Owner” with any of the residency types listed within the survey questionnaire. As a result, the percentages provided will be greater than 100.

### 1.2 Length of Residency

The average length of residency reported by Watab Township landowners is nearly 19 years with the median response being 15 years.

### 1.3 Location of Dwelling

The majority of respondents to the survey indicated they owned property off of the lakeshore and riverfront areas of the Township with 58% indicating non-lakeshore property ownership. Conversely, 24% indicated they owned lakeshore property within the Township and 16% indicated they owned property immediately adjacent to the Mississippi River. Of the respondents indicating lakeshore property ownership, most reported the location of their property as “Little Rock Lake” and “Harris Channel.” Table 1.2 shows the distribution of property locations reported by survey respondents.

**Table 1.2: Lakeshore vs. Non-lakeshore Property Ownership**

Location of Dwelling	Number	Percent (%)
Lakeshore	122	24%
Mississippi River	83	16%
Non-Lakeshore	295	58%

### 1.4 Proximity to U.S. Highway 10

When asked if they own property adjacent to U.S. Highway 10, 19% indicated they did own property adjacent to the Highway and 80% indicated they did not.

## 1.5 Community Appeal of Watab Township

Survey participants were asked to select the most appealing aspects of Watab Township from a list of nine possible attributes. Participants were asked to also write in community attributes they found most appeal if not included within the list. It is important to note that percent results will not add to 100% since participants were asked to “check all answers that apply.” Table 1.3 shows the results of respondents’ opinions on the most attractive qualities of Watab Township.

**Table 1.3: Watab Township Community Appeal**

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Location	445	88%
Community Atmosphere	159	31%
Lakes & Natural Resources	231	46%
Employment Opportunity	22	4%
Recreation	99	19%
Size	142	28%
Services Available	33	7%
Business Opportunity	11	2%
Schools/Youth Programs	84	17%

Other responses provided by survey participants included various qualities of the Mississippi River, and the peacefulness and rural qualities of the Township.

## 1.6 Feel Safe in Watab Township

Overall survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I feel safe in my township.” Table 1.4 shows the distribution of the results of this question.

**Table 1.4: Public Perception of Safety**

<b>Question: “I feel safe in my township”</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	137	27%
Agree	328	65%
Disagree	25	5%
Strongly Disagree	12	2%

## 1.7 Use of Land

Survey participants were asked to indicate in what ways they used their land based on a list provided within the survey questionnaire. Table 1.5 shows the distribution of the responses provided.

**Table 1.5: Use of Land**

<b>Land Use Type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Lakeshore residential	146	29%
Less than 2.5 acre residential	187	37%
Greater than 2.5 acre residential	136	27%
Agriculture with farm or pasture	28	6%

Commercial or small business	19	4%
Industrial or storage	2	0%
Open space including forest	20	4%
Wildlife Management/Wetlands	11	2%
Other	9	2%

The majority of “other” responses indicated property owners use their land primarily for rural residential or recreational purposes.

## 2.0 Land Use Questions

### 2.1 Satisfaction with Current Growth

Overall, respondents to the survey reported they were generally satisfied with current growth within Watab Township. This response was based on a distribution of answers with 1 being “very satisfied” through 4 being “not satisfied.” The distribution shows the average response was 2.4 with the most common response being 2.0.

### 2.2 Various Growth & Development

Survey participants were also asked to provide their opinion on a variety of growth issues including community change, new subdivision development, installation of private versus centralized sewer systems for new development, restriction of housing development to areas adjacent to existing cities, and unrestricted housing development. Table 2.1 provides the responses to these questions based on a ranking with 1 being “strongly agree and 4 being “strongly disagree.”<sup>2</sup>

**Table 2.1:**

Statement	Mean <sup>3</sup>	Mode <sup>4</sup>	Definition
I am pleased with the type of change occurring within Watab Township	2.5	2	The mean indicates an even split between “Agree” and “Disagree.” The mode suggests respondents tend to agree with the statement.

I think new sub-divisions, whether residential or commercial, should be encouraged to be close to existing city limits.	2.2	2	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents tend to agree with the statement.
I think privately owned and managed central sewer systems are fine for new housing developments.	2.1	2	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents tend to agree with the statement.
New housing developments should only be permitted near existing cities where public sewer and water are available.	2.2	1	The mean suggests respondents tend to agree with the statement. The mode suggests respondents strongly agree with the statement.
I feel that a person should be able to put a housing development anywhere in the township if they have suitable soils.	3.1	4	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents tend to disagree with the statement.

<sup>2</sup> **Note:** The original survey questionnaire stated this information conversely which may have impacted the data provided within section 2.2. The data provided in section 2.2 should be used for general discussion purposes only.

<sup>3</sup> Mean refers to the average of all responses.

<sup>4</sup> Mode refers to the most frequently indicated response.

### 2.3 Land Use Desirability

Survey participants were also asked to provide their opinion on a variety of growth issues including community change, new subdivision development, private versus centralized sewer systems for new development, potential restricting of housing development to areas adjacent to existing cities, and unrestricted housing development. Table 2.2 provides the responses to these questions based on a ranking with 1 being “strongly agree and 4 being “strongly disagree.”

**Table 2.2: Land Use Desirability**

Land Use Type	Mean <sup>5</sup>	Mode <sup>6</sup>	Definition
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Lakeshore residential	2.1	2	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents feel the use is somewhat desirable.
Residential under 2.5 acre lot size	2.4	2	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents feel the use is somewhat desirable.
Residential over 2.5 acre lot size	2.0	2	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents feel the use is somewhat desirable.
Agriculture	2.2	2	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents feel the use is somewhat desirable.
Commercial	2.6	2	The mean suggests respondents feel the use is somewhat not desirable. The mode suggests respondents feel the use is somewhat desirable.
Open Space	1.7	1	The mean suggests respondents feel the use is somewhat desirable. The mode suggests respondents feel the use is very desirable.

**2.4 Residential & Housing Development**

In the first of a line of questions related to residential growth and development, respondents were asked if they would like to see increased residential development within Watab Township. Of the survey participants responding to the question, 39%

<sup>5</sup> Mean refers to the average of all responses.

<sup>6</sup> Mode refers to the most frequently indicated response.

indicated they would like to see increased residential development within the Township while 57% indicated they would not.

Respondents were further asked to indicate in what ways new growth should be addressed based on the following ranking system:

1 = Increased Growth

2 = Slow Growth

3 = Limited or Restricted Growth

4 = Need Redevelopment of Existing Homes

Tables 2.3 through 2.9 provide survey participants' responses to the need of various types of residential development within Watab Township.

**Table 2.3: Single-family Housing Growth & Development**

<b>Single-family Housing</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Increased growth	165	33%
Slow growth	177	35%
Limited or restricted growth	111	22%
Need redevelopment of existing	25	5%

**Table 2.4: Town Home Growth & Development**

<b>Town Houses</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Increased growth	49	10%
Slow growth	95	19%
Limited or restricted growth	249	49%

Need redevelopment of existing	39	8%
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**Table 2.5: Apartment Growth & Development**

<b>Apartments</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Increased growth	19	5%
Slow growth	54	11%
Limited or restricted growth	288	57%
Need redevelopment of existing	63	12%

**Table 2.6: Condominium Growth & Development**

<b>Condos</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Increased growth	35	7%
Slow growth	91	18%
Limited or restricted growth	243	48%
Need redevelopment of existing	55	11%

**Table 2.7: 55+ Community Housing Growth & Development**

<b>55+ Communities</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Increased growth	102	20%
Slow growth	149	29%
Limited or restricted growth	156	31%
Need redevelopment of existing	28	6%

**Table 2.8: Assisted Living Facility Development**

<b>Assisted Living Facilities</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Increased growth	71	14%
Slow growth	126	25%
Limited or restricted growth	195	39%
Need redevelopment of existing	35	7%

**Table 2.9: Mobile Home Park Growth & Development**

<b>Mobile Home Parks</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Increased growth	9	2%
Slow growth	27	5%
Limited or restricted growth	242	48%
Need redevelopment of existing	140	28%

**2.5 Commercial & Industrial Development**

In the line of questions related to commercial and industrial development, respondents were asked if they would like to see increased commercial and industrial development within Watab Township. Of the survey participants responding to the question, 40% indicated they would like to see increased commercial and industrial development within the Township and 57% indicated they would not.

**2.6 Natural Resources & Open Space**

Respondents indicated by a large majority of 80% that they would like to see the preservation of open space areas of the Township and 18% of respondents indicated they would not.

Respondents were asked to rank a series of statements addressing parks, open space, natural beauty, and recreation based on their agreement or disagreement with the statements. Table 2.10 provides the responses to these questions based on a ranking with 1 being “strongly agree” and 4 being “strongly disagree.”

**Table 2.10: Natural Resources & Open Space**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean <sup>7</sup></b>	<b>Mode <sup>8</sup></b>	<b>Definition</b>
There are adequate parks and open space in our township now.	2.3	2	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents tend to agree with the statement.
I think we need to conserve more of our township's natural beauty for generations to come.	1.7	1	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents tend to strongly agree with the statement.
I feel that there are adequate community recreational opportunities in the township.	2.3	2	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents tend to agree with the statement.

<sup>7</sup> Mean refers to the average of all responses.

<sup>8</sup> Mode refers to the most frequently indicated response.

## **3.0 Facilities and Services Questions**

### **3.1 Level of Service**

Respondents to the survey were asked to rank a series of community services according to their level of satisfaction with each service. The following defines these rankings:

1 = Very Satisfied

2 = Satisfied

3 = Somewhat Satisfied

4 = Not Satisfied

Table 3.1 provides results on the level of service provided within Watab Township.

**Table 3.1: Level of Service**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Mean <sup>9</sup></b>	<b>Mode <sup>10</sup></b>	<b>Definition</b>
Fire Protection	2.0	2	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents are satisfied with the service.
Ambulance Service	2.2	2	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents are satisfied with the service.
Law Enforcement	2.2	2	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents are satisfied with the service.
Road Maintenance	2.4	2	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents are satisfied with the service.
Parks and Recreation	2.4	2	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents are satisfied with the service.
Environmental Services	2.6	2	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents are somewhat satisfied with the service
Public Transportation	2.8	3	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents are somewhat satisfied with the service

Planning and Zoning	2.9	3	Both the mean and mode suggest respondents are somewhat satisfied with the service
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<sup>9</sup> Mean refers to the average of all responses.

<sup>10</sup> Mode refers to the most frequently indicated response.

### **3.2 Community Website**

A narrow margin of survey participants indicated they would use a Website established by Watab Township if the Township were to do so. Of the responses, 51% indicated they would use the Township’s Website and 47% indicated they would not.

### **3.3 Zoning Administration**

When asked if they felt Watab Township should administer a Township zoning ordinance, 46% indicated they felt the Township should and 49% indicated they felt the Township should not.

Survey participants who indicated Watab Township should administer a Township zoning ordinance were further asked if they would be willing to pay for the ordinance administration through an increased tax levy. Of those respondents, 21% indicated they would be willing to pay for the administration while 46% indicated they would not.

### **3.4 Need for a New Town Hall**

When asked if Watab Township needs a new town hall, 25% indicated a new town hall was necessary while 72% indicated the new facility was not. 18% of respondents who indicated a need for a new Watab town hall further indicated they would be willing to pay for the new facility while 39% indicated they would not.

### **3.5 Comprehensive Plan Development**

Survey participants were asked if Watab Township should develop a Township comprehensive plan or remain under the jurisdiction of the county comprehensive plan. It is assumed that a “yes” response to the question indicates the need for Watab Township to develop a Township specific comprehensive plan, however because of the duality of the question the answers must be given less validity. 40% of survey respondents indicated “yes” in response to the question, and 45% indicated a “no” response. Of the respondents who answered “yes” to the question, 21% indicated they

would be willing to pay for the development of a Watab Township comprehensive plan through an increased tax levy while 43% indicated they would not.

### 3.6 Annexation, Special Districts, and Incorporation

In order to ascertain community feelings related to annexation, special district creation, and incorporation the following question was asked:

In the future would you like to see Watab Township:

- A. Develop orderly annexation agreements with adjacent Cities: Yes No
- B. Create a special district to monitor private septic systems: Yes No
- C. Incorporate some or all of Watab Township as a city: Yes No

Table 4.1 provides the results of this multiple-part question.

**Table 4.1: Annexation, Special Districts, and Incorporation**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>“Yes” Percent</b>	<b>“No” Percent</b>
Development of orderly annexation agreements	34%	55%
Creation of special district to monitor private septic systems	34%	53%
Incorporate Watab Township as a city	18%	69%

### 3.7 General Comments

Comments provided by survey respondents generally focused on the topics provided below. A complete list of survey comments is on file with the Watab Township Clerk.

- 1 Zoning administration: Comments present differing views on planning and zoning administration of Benton County and potential local planning and zoning administration by Watab Township.
- 2 General growth & development: Comments present differing views on growth and development within the Township including comments on large plat development.
- 3 Redevelopment: Several comments were received generally supporting the redevelopment of several commercial properties within the Township.
- 4 Community Services: Comments present differing views on several different community services.
- 5 Infrastructure: Comments present differing views on infrastructure options for existing and future development within the Township.

6 Annexation and incorporation: Comments present differing views on the annexation of portions of Watab Township as well as the incorporation of the Township.

7 Nuisance issues: Comments provided examples of nuisances such as speeding, animal control issues, junk and waste issues, vandalism, and other issues.

8 Environmental protection: Comments indicated a need for environmental protection measures, especially water quality protection of the Mississippi River, Little Rock, and other waters.