

October 18, 2018



Mtg Date: October 23, 2018
To: Township Board
From: Julie Johnston, AICP
Subject: *GO!* Green Oshtemo Plan – Work Session Discussion

The *GO!* Green Oshtemo planning effort has been underway since around the first of the year. The intent of the project is to coordinate the parks, recreation, nonmotorized, and conservation plans of the Township into one guiding document. This Plan will not only assist the Township in achieving its overall vision, but will support grant applications made to state and local agencies.

To ensure that the *GO!* Green Oshtemo Plan is supported to the fullest extent, it will be incorporated as part of the Township's Master Plan. To accomplish this goal, the Plan must go through the state mandated public hearing process for community master plans, which includes a public hearing before both the Planning Commission and Township Board.

During the course of development, individual study groups were created for the different components of the Plan – parks and recreation, nonmotorized, and conservation. These study groups have been meeting regularly to help guide the public process, provide input into the development of the plan, and offer a citizen's perspective. The goals and action strategies were reviewed by the study groups and have been presented at a public open house.

To facilitate a plan that is user-friendly and graphically interesting, a Summary Report booklet has been developed. Outlined in the booklet are the appendices, which provide the more detailed information utilized to create the Plan, as well as the detailed Action Plans. Since most will be accessing this Plan through the Township's webpage, the document was also designed for the online user, allowing the appendices to be separate links. This will make it easier for individuals to concentrate on the material they are most interested in.

Attached to this memo is the first draft of the Summary Report, as well as the Action Plan appendices. The remaining appendices are still being organized by staff but will be made available by the November 13th meeting, when staff will be requesting the Township Board allow the draft plan to be distributed to our adjacent jurisdictions for input. Any comments or requested changes would be greatly appreciated as we complete the development of the Plan.

Thank you.



GO! Green

Oshkemo

Parks & Recreation ↔ Nonmotorized Transportation ↔ Conservation



Summary Report, Adopted ??

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of this Plan was a collaborative effort, created through the engagement of citizens and stakeholders of the Township at various meetings, workshops and online engagement. This Plan recognizes the contributions of all who participated in the planning process.

Township Board

Libby Heiny-Cogswell, Supervisor
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The Township also wishes to thank the residents and interested citizens who attended the public outreach meetings throughout the development of the Plan. Your assistance was invaluable to the planning effort!

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The intent of this document is to provide a summary report of the complete *GO! Green Oshtemo Plan*. The full Plan can be found on the Township’s website at www.oshtemo.org under the Parks or Planning Department’s webpages. The full report includes the appendices outlined below:

Appendices:

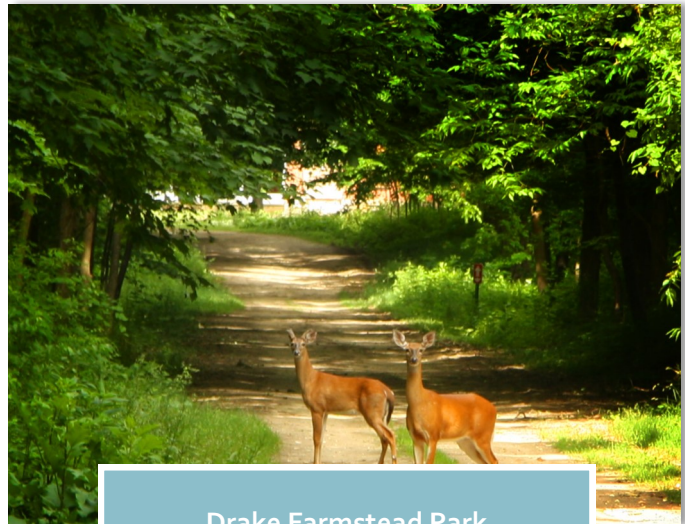
- A. Existing Conditions Inventory
- B. Trends and Needs Overview
- C. Public Input Summary
- D. Parks and Recreation Action Plan
- E. Nonmotorized Transportation Action Plan
- F. Conservation Action Plan
- G. Collective Plan Goals and Action Strategies
- H. Parks Administrative Structure
- I. Resolution of Approval

Technical Support Documents:

- J. Park Plans/Maps
- K. Nonmotorized Corridor Recommendations
- L. Capital Improvement Plan
- M. Complete Streets Policy



Wiffleball at Township Park



Drake Farmstead Park

“One may lack words to express the impact of beauty but no one who has felt it remains untouched. It is renewal, enlargement, intensification. The parks preserve it permanently in the inheritance of the American citizens.”
 ~~Bernard DeVoto

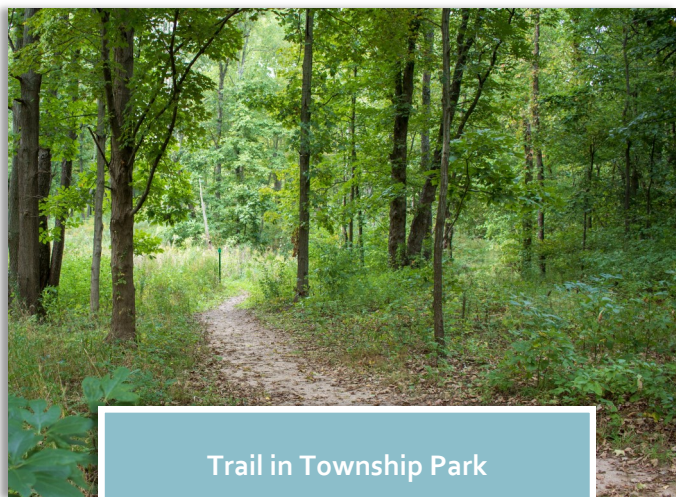
OVERVIEW

Introduction

The GO! Green Oshtemo Plan is the first of its kind for Oshtemo Township where parks, recreation, nonmotorized facilities, and conservation of open space and greenways is planned in a comprehensive and coordinated way. The Plan is a guide that addresses expressed community desires related to these important amenities, which play a vital role in the lives of Township residents by providing:

Active recreational opportunities.	Passive enjoyment of rural areas and natural landscapes.	Opportunities for environmental preservation and sustained rural character.	Improved community health and quality of life.
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The Township prides itself on the existing parks and nonmotorized facilities within the community that are extensively utilized by Oshtemo and neighboring residents. In addition, the open space opportunities provided by Township partners such as the Lillian Anderson Arboretum owned by Kalamazoo College and the Wolf Tree Nature Trail Preserve owned by the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy offer those natural outdoor experiences for residents in close proximity to where they live. The Township’s desire to continue to address conservation of open spaces and greenways is not only to provide habitat protection but to preserve rural character and add to the overall aesthetic value of the community. Finally, the planned nonmotorized network is the framework that connects residents to these important destinations.



Trail in Township Park

Caring for and preserving these resources, as well as adapting to the changing needs of the community is essential to Oshtemo’s health and sustainability. As population continues to increase, understanding and planning for these changes will be critical to future capital improvement decisions. The GO! Green Oshtemo planning effort included a thorough process of public input, inventory, and data collection. The public input has provided Township leaders and staff a better understanding of its residents’ needs and desires. The GO! Green Oshtemo Plan captures these needs and provides goals and action strategies to accomplish the desired improvements.

Did You Know....

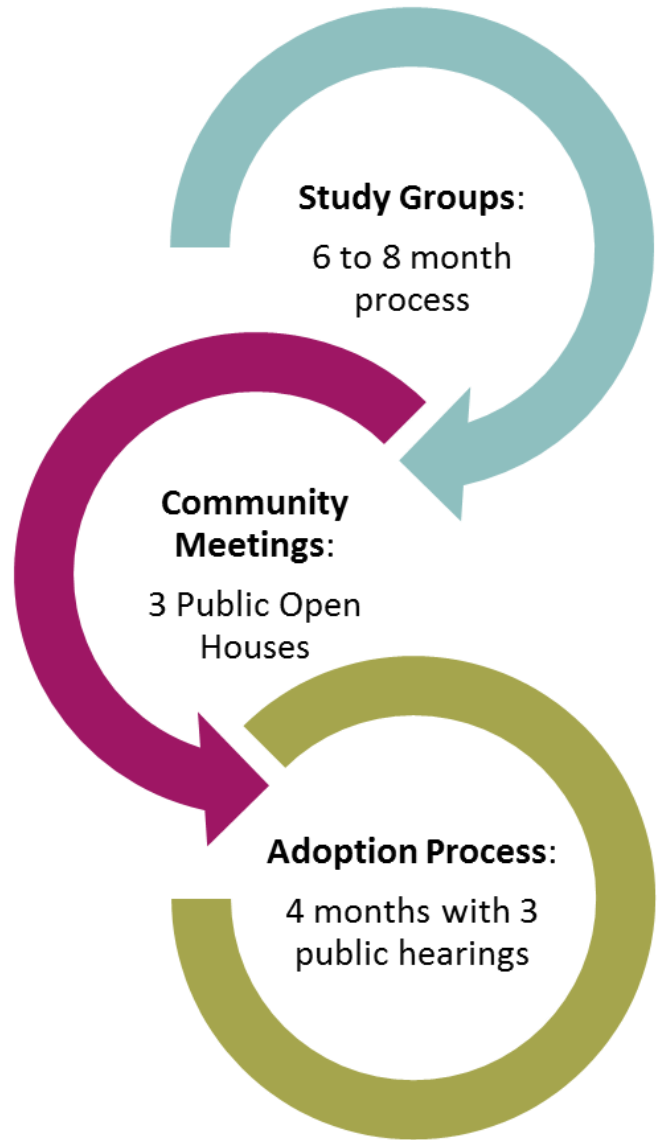
- ◆ The Township has approximately 122 acres currently dedicated to parks and recreation:
 - ⇒ Flesher Field Park - 24 acres
 - ⇒ Oshtemo Township Park - 70 acres
 - ⇒ Drake Farmstead Park - 26 acres
 - ⇒ Grange Hall and Playground - 2 acres
- ◆ Two community buildings are available for rent to Oshtemo residents:
 - ⇒ Community Center
 - ⇒ Grange Hall
- ◆ Between 2011 and 2017, almost \$3 million has been spent on improvements to the facilities within the parks and the community buildings. Of this total, approximately 61 percent or \$1.75 million was funded through grants and private donations.
- ◆ Oshtemo has approximately 17 miles of nonmotorized facilities, including multi-use paths, sidewalks and trails.
- ◆ In 2017, the Township Board adopted a Natural Features Protection District as part of the Subdivision/Site Condominium Ordinance in an effort to preserve open space and important natural resources found in the more rural part of the Township.
- ◆ Additional recreation and conservation opportunities in the Township managed by other organizations include:
 - ⇒ Lillian Anderson Arboretum
 - ⇒ Wolf Tree Natural Trail Preserve
 - ⇒ Kal-Haven Trail State Park and Kalamazoo River Valley Trail

Resident-Driven Plan

Public participation played an integral role in the *GO!* Green Oshtemo planning process. Three study groups were established - Parks and Recreation, Nonmotorized Transportation, and Conservation - to help guide the development of the larger plan. The study groups included interested residents, Township Board, Parks Committee, Planning Commission members, and staff. The groups generally met monthly to discuss the public process, review research conducted by staff, provide input on the plans goals, action strategies, and outcomes.

Three public outreach meetings were held throughout the development of the *GO!* Green Oshtemo Plan to garner resident feedback. During the first workshop and for a month after in an online format, the Township requested residents complete a survey with questions related to parks, nonmotorized transportation, and conservation. Over 200 citizens responded to the survey, providing important insight into resident desires.

Finally, an adoption process was designed to allow for three public hearings, providing the residents of Oshtemo opportunities to weigh in on the draft plan. The first was with the Township Board in November of 2018, which was at the beginning of a four month process. The Plan was updated based on the input received and then a public hearing was held by the Township Planning Commission in January of 2019. They made a recommendation to the Township Board, who ultimately approved the Plan in February of that year.

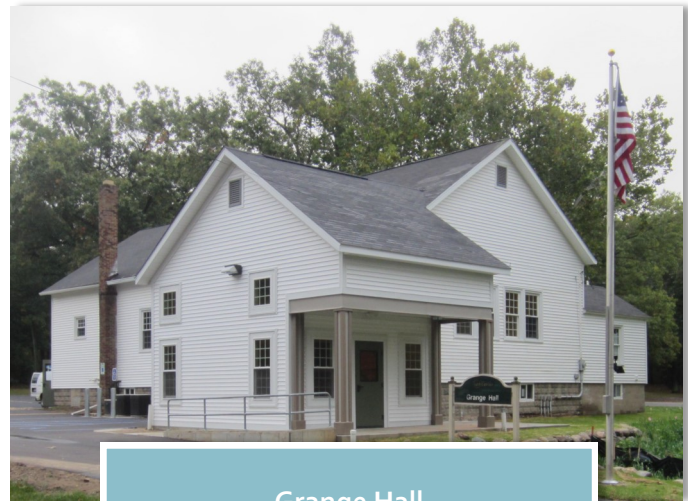


GO! Green Oshtemo Kick-Off Meeting

Existing Inventory

Grange Hall and Playground - Neighborhood Park and Community Building

The Grange Hall is a historic building located in the rural north-west quadrant of the Township on North 3rd Street. It has ties to Oshtemo’s agricultural heritage hosting the Grange Association and is a popular location for country and square-dancing sessions. The building was renovated in 2017 making it fully accessible, with an elevator to both levels and barrier-free restrooms. The site also contains a small new playground, picnic area, and basketball court, classifying it as a neighborhood park.



Grange Hall



Flesher Field: Music in the Park

Oshtemo Township Park - Community Park

This park measures roughly 70 acres and is located behind the Township Hall at West Main and 7th Streets. It features both an active recreation area and a hilly, wooded area for passive recreation. The park includes two paved loop trails, a playground, two picnic shelters, two tennis courts, two basketball courts, a wiffleball field, restroom building, and parking lot. One of the biggest draws is the 18-hole disc golf course that weaves through the wooded area of the park. Unpaved walking trails are also found in the wooded area with an overlook, which was constructed in 2012. Township Park has become extremely popular, attracting both visitors from within the Township and surrounding county.

Flesher Field Park - Community Park

Flesher Field, located on 9th Street south of Stadium Drive, is a popular destination for field games, family gatherings, and special events. A key attraction of this 24-acre park is the large open sports field available for soccer, football, and other games. The newly upgraded park also features a playground, two picnic pavilions, two wiffleball fields, accessible restrooms, a 0.17-mile paved loop trail, and a gazebo and garden area.

In addition to the active recreation area, Flesher Field has 12 acres of woodlands west of the sports field. The woodlands feature a canopy of white oaks interspersed with red and black oaks and hickory trees that support many species of wildlife, especially birds and butterflies. Future plans call for continued forest management, invasive species control, and improvements to the informal walking trails located here.



Group Hike at Township Park

Drake Farmstead Park - Community Park and Historic Building

Drake Farmstead Park is a 26-acre park currently under development at the eastern edge of the Township on Drake Road north of West Main Street. A master plan was developed with public input in 2015 that proposes new recreational uses for the property while preserving the historic character and rural atmosphere of the Farmstead.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the site contains an historic brick farmhouse that is being restored by volunteers with the Oshtemo Historical Society. Touring the restored farmhouse will allow visitors to better understand life in the early years of the Township.

Walking trails, a picnic shelter, interpretive signs, and a parking lot will be developed in 2019 with funding from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and Oshtemo Township. A 1,200 square foot multi-purpose building will also be constructed in 2019. Built in the style of the former carriage barn, it will host year 'round recreation activities and educational programs focused on nature and local history. The building will also house the park's restrooms.

Park trails will traverse a variety of natural communities, from reconstructed prairie to savanna to managed woodlot. Future plans for the park include development of an event lawn for outdoor community events, a gazebo and garden area for concerts and small events, and an educational garden.



Drake Farmstead

Nonmotorized Network

The first nonmotorized plan for Oshtemo Township was developed in 2008, with updates to the plan completed in 2012. In addition, nonmotorized transportation needs were outlined in the Township's 2011 Master Plan. As nonmotorized planning is



West Main Street Multi-Use Path

relatively new to the Township, a full network of multi-use paths, bike routes, sidewalks, connector trails, and other nonmotorized facilities is still developing. Ultimately, this network is intended to connect Oshtemo residents to parks, regional trail facilities, retail areas throughout the Township, and to surrounding communities.

A step in this direction is the recent approval of a Complete Streets Policy for the Township. The policy defines complete streets as a design framework that enables safe and convenient access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and citizens of all ages and abilities. Recognizing that the Township's transportation system needs to be about more than moving vehicles efficiently and safely, the network also needs to meet the needs of all users. In addition, the Township's Subdivision and Site Condominium Ordinance requires sidewalks in all new developments.

Currently, Oshtemo has approximately 17 miles of nonmotorized facilities. This includes facilities like the 10-foot multi-use path along West Main Street, sidewalks within neighborhoods, and unpaved off-road trails within the parks.

In addition, the Kalamazoo Region has just over 250 miles of non-motorized facilities, many of which are dedicated shoulders for pedestrians and bicyclists. The region has over 70 miles of off-road, shared use paths, like the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail (KRVV) and the City of Portage Eliason Nature Reserve Trail, and the trails through Portage Creek Bicentennial Park. Nearly 55 miles of bike lanes currently exist in the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) region, which encompasses Kalamazoo County and an eastern portion of Van Buren County.

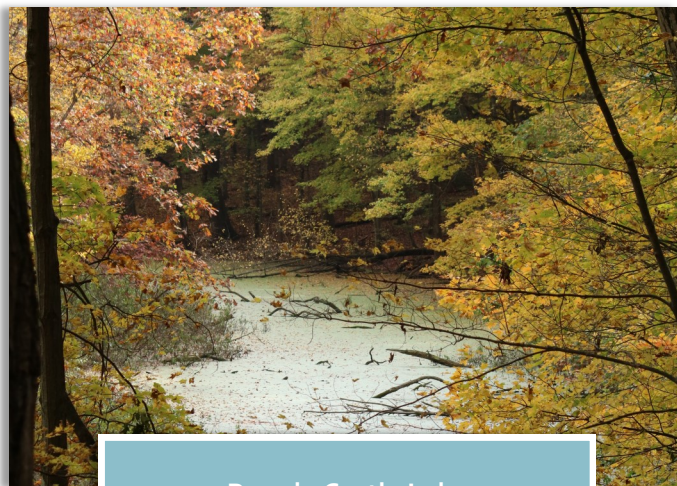
Conservation

“Savvy states and communities are starting to think about green space in a more thoughtful and systematic way. They realize that green infrastructure is not a frill - it is smart conservation for the twenty-first century.”

~Mark. A Benedict and Edward T. McMahon
Conservation Fund

Conservation of important natural features has been a priority of the Township’s for many years, as evidenced by previous Master Plan goals and Zoning Ordinance regulations that seek to preserve open spaces. This, however, is the Township’s first comprehensive review and planning effort to address natural features directly. They are an important element of the character of Oshtemo Township, particularly in the less developed western portion of the community. Natural features are not easily restored after they are degraded, and they provide numerous existing and potential areas for parks and recreation, particularly conservation and greenway opportunities.

The pre-settlement ecosystems within the Township included oak savanna, prairie, oak and beech and maple forests. Oak savanna, a plant community where herbaceous and woody plants co-dominate, was formerly a defining feature of southern Lower Michigan, and is now one of the rarest plant communities. Remnants of these pre-settlement ecosystems present a unique opportunity within Oshtemo Township, because they are areas that have been relatively undisturbed by human influence. Possible remnant ecosystems may be found in wetlands



Bonnie Castle Lake

near the northwestern boundary of the Township, at the south-east Township boundary near the Al Sabo Preserve in Texas Township, within the Arcadia Creek area along the eastern boundary of the Township, cemeteries, and areas along railroads.

Woodlands comprise over 33 percent of total land area in Oshtemo and are found throughout the Township. They play an important role in wildlife habitat, air quality, and recreation. In both the rural and more developed areas of the Township, proximity to these woodlands should be considered an asset and preservation should be a priority as recreational use of these woodlands – including hiking, biking, or simply natural areas – can become an amenity for residents.



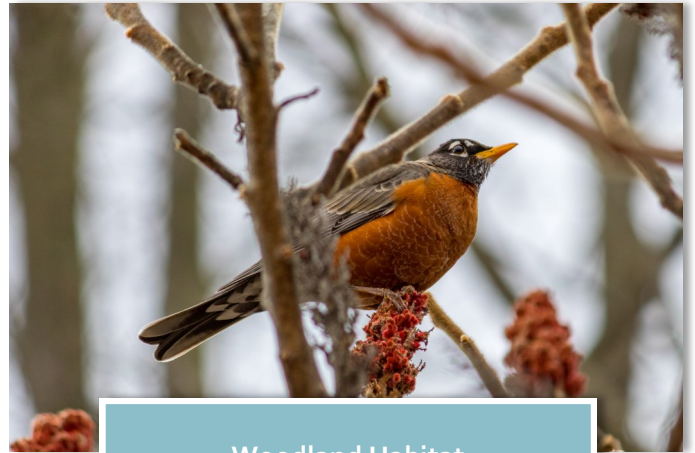
Wetland Habitat

Small lakes, ponds, and wetland areas are scattered throughout the Township. Water features are generally valued for their views, sense of tranquility, and recreational opportunities that they provide. Wetlands which are valued for water quality improvement, flood storage, and wildlife habitat are located primarily near the small lakes found in Oshtemo. The Township Master Plan indicates that water is the smallest undeveloped land use category, comprising 3 percent of undeveloped land and just over 1.6 percent of total land in Oshtemo Township.

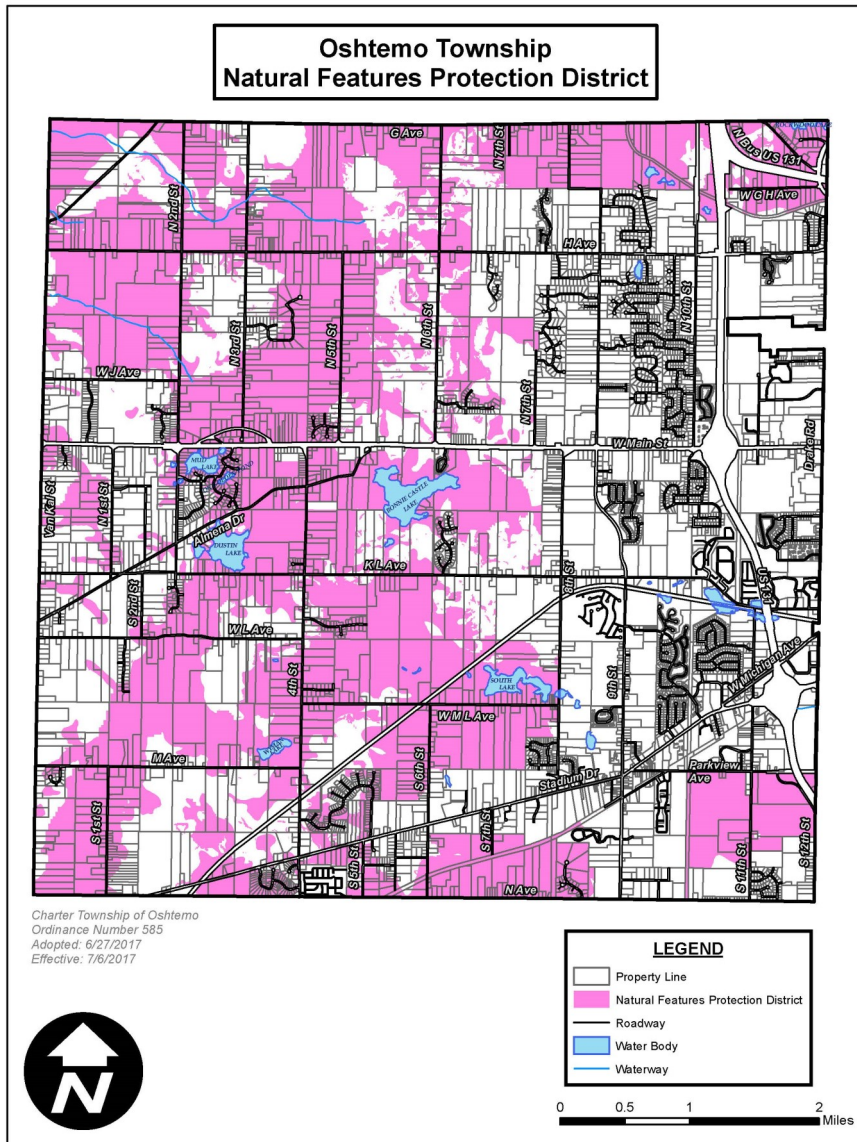
Soils in Oshtemo Township are generally sandy loams, which have high value locally as an agricultural resource and present a number of limitations to development that should be considered when determining areas for conservation or future park development. Because of sandy soils and high permeability, the Township generally has elevated annual groundwater recharge potential from 12-17 inches per year. Groundwater is the only source of drinking water in Kalamazoo County. Therefore, clean accessible groundwater is a critical quality of life

indicator for the Township, particularly for those areas that do not have accessible to treated water through the City of Kalamazoo’s public system.

The Western Michigan University Upjohn Center for GIS and Geographical Change provided a Natural Features Preservation report to the Township. The goal of this project was to accurately locate natural features and existing protected areas and greenspace that contribute to the quality of life and rural character of Oshtemo. This report contributed to the development of the first Natural Features Protection District, which was developed as part of the Township’s Subdivision/Site Condominium Ordinance. The intent of the ordinance is to preserve up to 40 percent of a parcel located within the District if it is ever developed under the Subdivision/Site Condominium Ordinance. In addition, as properties develop the preserved land must attach to any neighboring open spaces, ultimately creating a connected network of greenways throughout the Township.



Woodland Habitat



TRENDS AND NEEDS

Transforming Trends

Changing Demographics

- Oshtemo’s population is expected to increase by 47% by 2040.
- By 2021, approximately 21% of the Township’s population will be 65 years and older.
- More than 13% of the population has a disability, and this number increases as the population ages.

Implications:

- More parks will be needed.
- Loss of open space and natural areas as new development is constructed.
- Multi-modal and accessible facilities will be critical.

Lifestyle Trends

- Main lifestyle segments* in Oshtemo are:
 - * College Town - students or university employees - seek new experiences, variety, and adventure.
 - * Retirement Communities - generally 55 and older - are health conscious and enjoy organized recreation.
 - * Green Acres - Average age is 43 - prefer country living and active outdoor sports, like hiking.

Implications:

- A need for more organized sports and activities within the parks.
- Development of hiking and biking trails.
- Connections of nonmotorized facilities to destinations and greenspaces.

Health Concerns

- According to Michigan Department of Community Health** for Kalamazoo County:
 - * 65% are overweight or obese (BMI 25+).
 - * 12% have been diagnosed with diabetes.
 - * 22% of adults do not engage in any physical activity.
- #1 cause of death in Kalamazoo County is heart disease.

Implications:

- Encourage participation in active recreation and outdoor activities.
- Support greenways that allow for walking, hiking, and biking.
- Ensure facilities are accessible to all ability levels.

Increased Development

- Dominate land use is residential, with 49% listed as rental units.
- Approximately 575 new housing units were built between 2010 and 2016.
- Commercial/industrial land uses total approximately 10% of Oshtemo acreage.
- Rural character continues to be vital to Township residents.

Implications:

- Conservation of open spaces is vital to maintain rural character.
- Natural features within the developed areas need protection.
- Habitats are threatened by continued development.

*Esri Tapestry Segmentation, 2016 (2017 Master Plan Update)

**Community Health Needs Assessment, Bronson Methodist Hospital, December 2016.

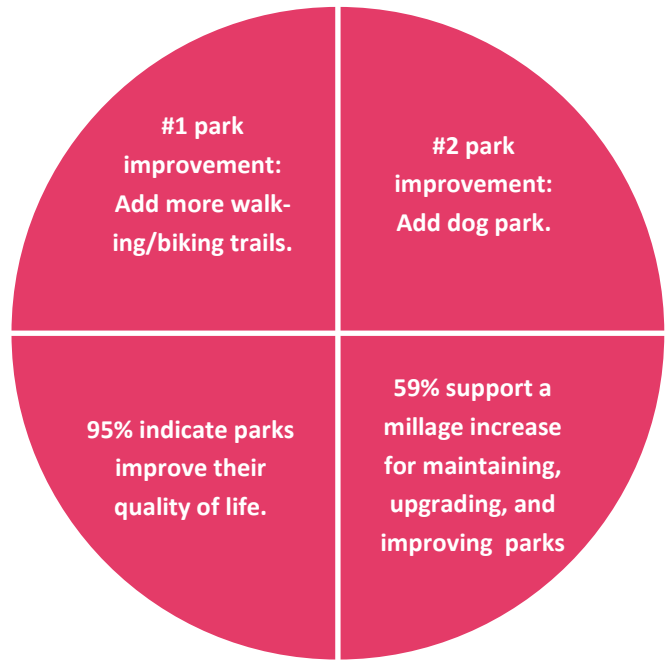
Community Input

Residents who attended the *GO!* Green Oshtemo Kick-Off Meeting provided a myriad of input on parks and recreation, nonmotorized transportation, and conservation within Oshtemo. As the meeting progressed, the following top six themes emerged as most important to the participants:

- Increase connectivity to destinations within the Township (township hall, parks, library, retail centers, nature preserves, etc.)
- Increase safety for nonmotorized pedestrians and bicyclists; think of needed functional requirements.
- Consider additional neighborhood parks in the urban area of the Township.
- Provide more passive and active recreation opportunities in the parks, including winter options.
- Protect important natural features in the urban area of the Township.
- Focus primary conservation efforts for greenways, trails, habitat corridors in the western “rural” area of the Township.

In addition, subsequent open houses asked residents to indicate desired amenities within the parks. The top three responses included basketball courts, walking/biking trails, and water spray park.

2017 Community Survey

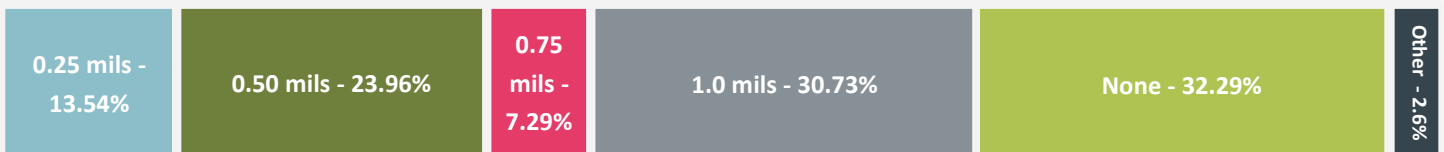


2018 *GO!* Green Oshtemo Survey - Sample Questions:

What benefit of nonmotorized facilities are most important to you? (choose all that apply)	
Transportation to Work	10.94%
Connectivity to Destinations	39.06%
Access to Nature/Outdoors	55.73%
Recreation/Fitness	73.44%
Other	10.42%

If the Township works to conserve greenways/open spaces, should paths/trails be developed within those areas?	
Definitely	36.18%
Maybe, but Strategically Placed	30.65%
No, Preserve as Natural	30.15%
Not Sure	1.51%
Other	1.51%

What level of millage would residents support for parks, sidewalks, trails, and conservation?



Organizational Needs

In addition to understanding the demographic trends and input from Oshtemo residents, comparing the Township’s existing amenities against recommended guidelines developed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) assists Township officials to determine possible future needs. It is important to note that the Township cannot meet all of its residents recreation needs. Therefore, an understanding of other local facilities owned and maintained by partner organizations or private entities helps to fill those possible recreation “gaps.” A full analysis of existing facilities is provided in Appendix A, but the following information details specifics for the Township based on its current population estimate of 22,671 persons.

MDNR Guidelines for Recommended Park Acreage

	Neighborhood Park	Community Park
Recommended Park Acres/1,000 Population	2 acres	5 to 8 acres
Recommended Number of Acres per Park	5 to 10 acres per park	30 to 50 acres per park
Recommended Park Acreage for Oshtemo Population	Approximately 45 acres	Approximately 181 acres
Recommended Number of Parks for Oshtemo	4 to 8 parks	3 to 6 parks
Total Township Park Acres	1 park	3 parks
Total Number of Township Parks	2 acres	120 acres

MDNR Facility Standards Comparison Sampling of Suggested Facility Development Standards Oshtemo Township and within 1/2 Mile of the Township

Activity/Facility	Service Radius	No. of Units per Population	Suggested based on Oshtemo Population	Township Owned	Other Publicly Operated	Township Deficiency	Total Deficiency
Basketball	1/4 - 1/2 mile	1 court per 500	5	2	4	3	1 surplus
Tennis	1/4 - 1/2 mile	1 court per	11	2	8	9	2
Soccer	1 - 2 miles	1 field per 10,000	2	1	11	1	9 surplus
Local Walking Paths	N/A	N/A	Unknown	1	7	Unknown	Unknown
Baseball	1/4 - 1/2 mile	1 field per 500	5	0	2	5	3
Football	15 - 30 minutes travel time	1 field per 20,000	1	0	1	1	0
Volleyball	1/2 - 1 mile	1 court per	5	0	1	5	4
Regional Multi-Use Trails	N/A	1 system per region	1	0	1	0	0

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In the development of the *GO! Green Oshtemo Plan*, six guiding principles were created to help direct the long-term vision for the community. Guiding principles are constant and articulate the core ideals that both guided the *GO! Green Oshtemo* planning effort, as well as the direction of the goals and action strategies over the Plan's 5-year time horizon and beyond.

Health and Wellness

With the rising rates of chronic disease and an increased prevalence of sedentary lifestyles of many Americans, the affordable and accessible solution of local parks and recreation opportunities becomes more important. Beautiful, well-maintained parks and nonmotorized facilities are a source of pride for the Township and reflect our community's priorities to improve quality of life and help make healthy lifestyle choices possible for all members of the community.

In addition to personal health, parks and recreation opportunities are a livability factor for the community as a whole. According to the National Recreation and Parks Association, recreation opportunities are often cited as one of the most important factors in surveys regarding community livability. Parks, in particular, are a gathering place for all individuals to promote fun, learning, and enjoyment regardless of their socioeconomic status.



Family Activity: Music in the Park



Accessible Trail: Township Park

Accessible and Connected

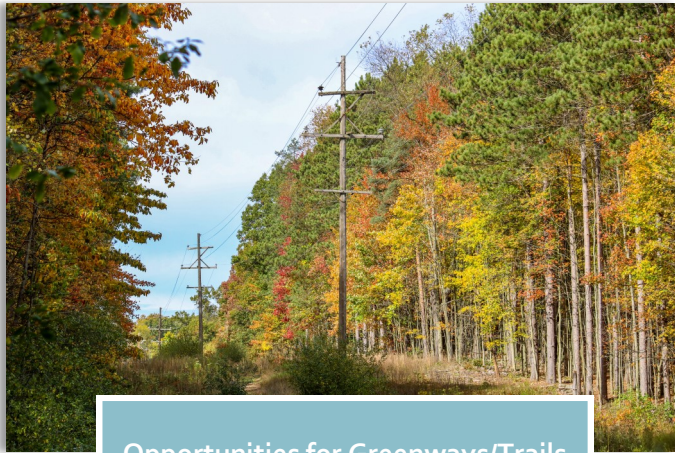
Oshtemo Township has a dual nature. The roughly east third of the Township is urbanized with higher residential and commercial densities, while the western two-thirds is predominately rural residential, with scattered subdivisions and large relatively undeveloped parcels. A guiding principle of this Plan is to find ways to link these disparate development patterns through connections between conservation, parks, and nonmotorized planning.

In addition to connecting the urban and rural areas, this Plan intends to link people to their community. Both popular destinations within Oshtemo and the natural environment will be networked through nonmotorized facilities and greenways. Partnerships with conservation organizations will provide outdoor opportunities and environmental education programs to connect residents to the natural world.

Finally, ensuring social equity through accessibility is also key to any implementation strategies of this Plan. Parks and recreation facilities, both passive and active, should encourage diverse populations to interact and recreate.

Conservation and Preservation

The natural environment is an important characteristic of Oshtemo Township. Once impacted, the natural features on the land cannot be easily restored. To help protect this green infrastructure, the Township will actively conserve land, preserve landscapes in the built environment, and develop sustainable practices for the responsible management of Township owned facilities.



Opportunities for Greenways/Trails



Volunteers at Flesher Field Park

Prioritization and Implementation

Funding is an essential part of providing parks, recreation, greenway, and nonmotorized facilities and amenities in Oshtemo Township. Each year, the Township completes a five-year capital improvement plan, which prioritizes facility development. While this Plan delineates implementation, as grants become available the Township may need to be nimble and allow priorities to shift based on available funding.

Partnerships and Relationships

Engaging the Oshtemo community is a key aspect of this Plan as well as any future implementation efforts. Transparency related to planning, budgeting, and facility improvements will be continuous priorities.

Both the public and private sectors will be important partners to maximize limited resources for conservation, parks, and nonmotorized planning. Improving relationships and coordinating efforts will improve outcomes for the benefit of all Oshtemo residents

Improvements and Maintenance

Continuous improvements and innovation help ensure that our parks, recreation, nonmotorized, and greenway facilities are efficient and relevant to the community. Ensuring that past projects are completed and existing facilities are maintained will continue to be a consideration of the Township as capital improvement planning is conducted each year.



Grange Hall Improvements

GOALS AND ACTIONS

Goals

The goals outlined in this Plan are intended to be broad, visionary statements that are not time specific and are intended to serve as a guide to future Township leaders and staff. In addition, they are integrated with and support the overall Master Plan for the Township. The action strategies, which can be found in detail in Appendices D through G, translate these goals into more specific direction that will help implement the overall vision of the Plan. The development of these goals and action strategies were accomplished through:

- An understanding of current conditions within the Township;
- The public input process both conducted for the development of this Plan and other Master Plan and Township outreach efforts;
- The vision of the current Township Master Plan, and past Park and Recreation, and Nonmotorized Plans; and,
- Direction from the *GO! Green Oshtemo* Study Groups.

The goals identify a desired future outcome for the entirety of the Township, creating a cohesive whole that allows each segment of the *GO! Green Oshtemo* effort to interrelate and support the other. They also describe broad public purposes towards which the individual action strategies are aimed.

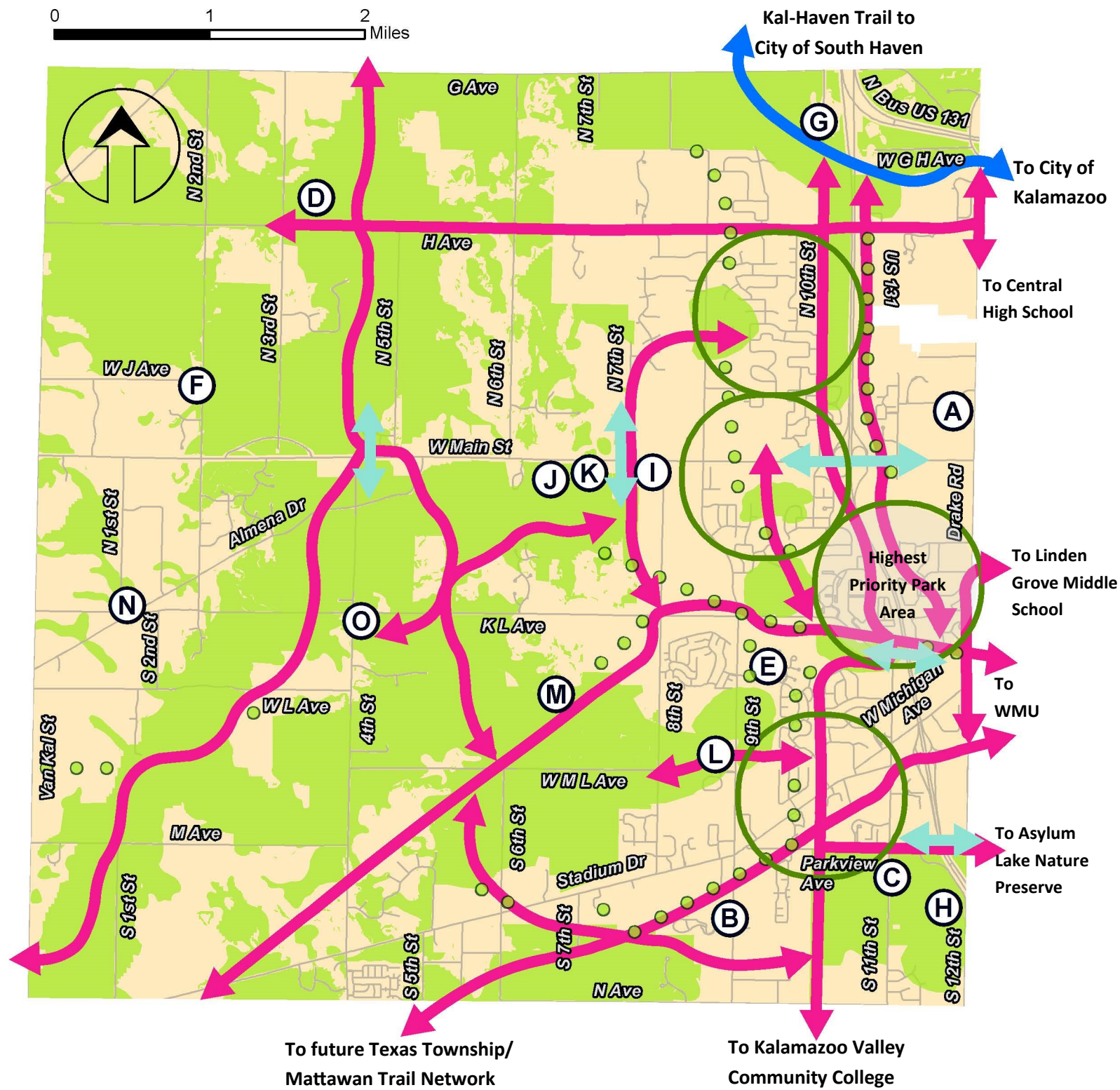
Conceptual Framework Map

The *GO! Green Oshtemo* Plan is all about connections. Connecting our residents to those amenities that support and enhance the quality of life in Oshtemo Township. As a community that sustains both a suburban and rural environment, linking these dual characteristics is critical to enriching all lifestyles. The Conceptual Framework Map on the following pages provides that “big picture” plan; linking east to west, parks and conservation, and a far-reaching nonmotorized network that connects it all.

The Natural Areas of Interest outlined on the map are those areas of the Township where significant natural features may be found and where future conservation efforts may be targeted. The Neighborhood Park Focus Areas delineate where the Township will concentrate efforts for possible future park development, due to population and development densities. Finally, the Conceptual Nonmotorized Framework is a high level model of how the future network may develop over time. It is intended to convey important linkages and how this system interacts with destinations, neighborhoods, commercial areas, and future conservation opportunities.



Conceptual Framework Map



DESTINATION

A	Drake Farmstead Park
B	Flesher Field Park
C	Genessee Prairie Cemetery
D	Grange Hall & Playground
E	Heritage Christian Academy
F	Hill Cemetery
G	Kal-Haven Trail State Park
H	Kalamazoo Chirstian Elementary
I	Kalamazoo Public Library
J	Lillian Anderson Arboretum
K	Oshtemo Township Park
L	Prairie Ridge Elementary
M	Schellenberg Nature Preserve
N	West Osthemo Cemetery
O	Wolf Tree Nature Preserve Trails

- Road Network
- Potential Wildlife Habitat Connections
- ▭ Neighborhood Park Focus Area
- Natural Areas of Interest
- Conceptual Non-Motorized Framework**
- Improved Highway Crossing
- Kal-Haven Trail/Kalamazoo River Valley Trail (Existing)
- Nonmotorized Route



PARKS AND RECREATION GOALS

The following goals are specific to the development, maintenance, and operation of the existing parks in the Township, as well as the acquisition and improvement of new parks.



GOAL: Exceptional Park Experience

Deliver an exceptional park user experience through proper maintenance and continuous improvements, recognizing that our parks are a source of community pride.



GOAL: Accessibility and Diversity

Provide a diversity of recreational opportunities, both active and passive, that meet the needs of all segments of Oshtemo’s population.



GOAL: Acquisition

Explore land acquisition opportunities to develop new parks.



GOAL: Development of Existing Facilities

Continue progress towards development of existing park facilities in established and undeveloped Township park land.



GOAL: Environmental Stewardship

Foster environmental stewardship through the preservation of important natural features and sustainable design practices within parks, supporting efforts to make Oshtemo a leader in environmental conservation.



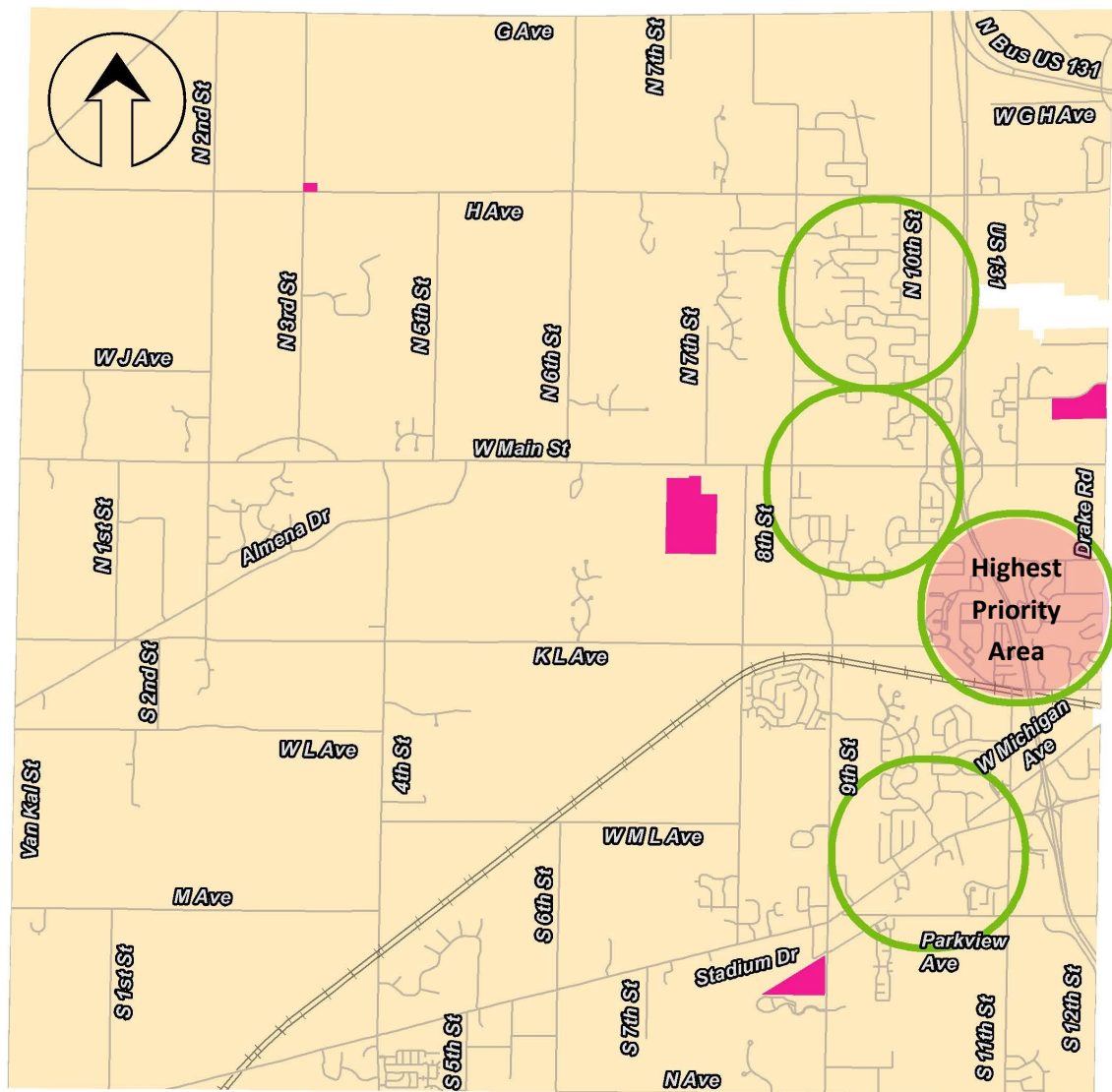
Recreation Variety in Oshtemo Township

Parks and Recreation Implementation

Based on the MDNR’s suggested classification system for parks, the Township is deficient in neighborhood and/or mini parks. As shown in this Plan, the residents of the Township have indicated a desire for additional parks in the more densely populated areas of the community. A key implementation strategy is to address this issue with the acquisition of property within the priority areas outlined in the Neighborhood Park Priority Map. These areas were determined based on population density and distance to the existing Township community parks.

To ensure movement towards achieving the Plan goals, the Township anticipates completing a number of capital improvement projects over the course of this 5-year Plan and beyond. To see these projects to fruition, many will need support of both State and local grant dollars. Appendix D provides the complete outline of the capital improvements planned for the existing parks.

Neighborhood Park Priority Areas



NONMOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION GOALS

The goals and action strategies for the nonmotorized plan are intended to establish a physical and cultural environment that supports and encourages safe, comfortable, and convenient ways for a wide spectrum of pedestrians and bicyclists to travel throughout the Township and into the surrounding communities.



GOAL: Connectivity

Increase connectivity between residential neighborhoods and nearby nonmotorized facilities to connect residents to commercial areas, employment, recreation, and public transportation.



GOAL: Safety and Accessibility

Provide for complete streets, as appropriate, on all Oshtemo roadways to emphasize safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel to all users of roadways.



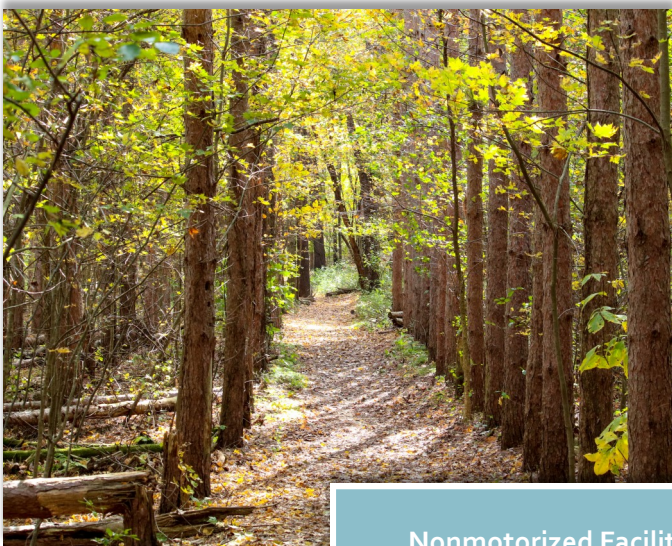
GOAL: Planning

Incorporate nonmotorized best practices and recommendations into all relevant Township ordinances, policies, and plans.



GOAL: Education

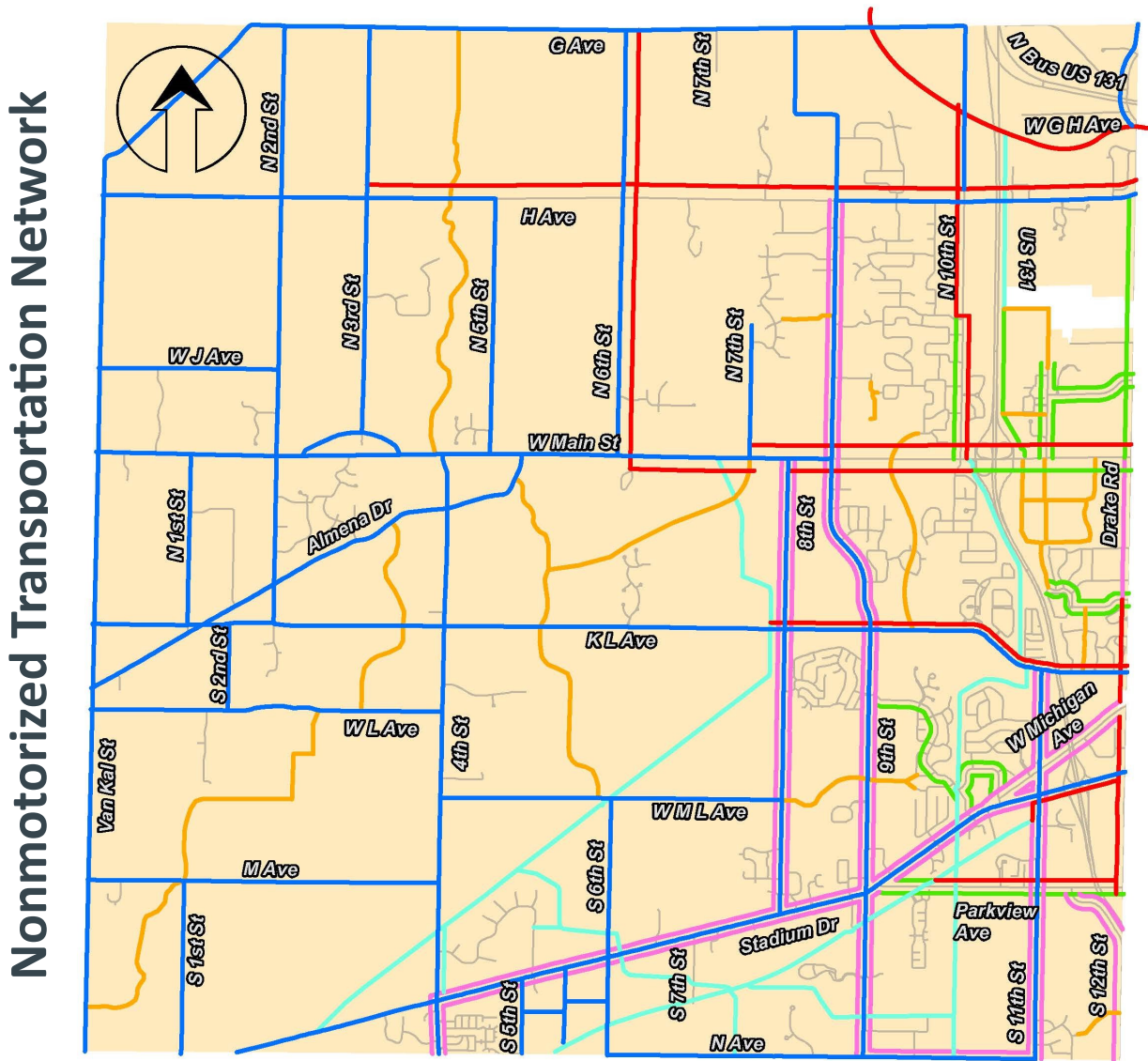
To achieve the above goals, increase awareness of the benefits of nonmotorized transportation and provide information regarding safe integration of motorized and nonmotorized modes of transportation.



Nonmotorized Facilities in Oshtemo Township

Nonmotorized Transportation Implementation

The Nonmotorized Transportation Network Map provides both multi-use paths and sidewalks that follow roadways, as well as ideas for off-road connections intended throughout the Township. This is a long-range plan of existing and envisioned facilities that will connect the entire Township. The intent of the future nonmotorized efforts is to create a network of links to adjacent jurisdictions, provide access to destinations within and around the Township, and ensure a system of “loop connections” throughout the community.



Nonmotorized Transportation Network

0 1 2 Miles

- Road Network
- Facility Type**
- Nonmotorized Link
- Connector Trail
- Paved Shoulder/Bike
- Sidewalk
- Six Foot Shared Use Path
- Ten Foot Shared Use Path



CONSERVATION GOALS

The goals and action strategies below are intended to provide both a long-range vision for the Township, as well as specific short-term action strategies that foster the burgeoning conservation efforts of the community.

GOAL: Conserve the Natural Environment

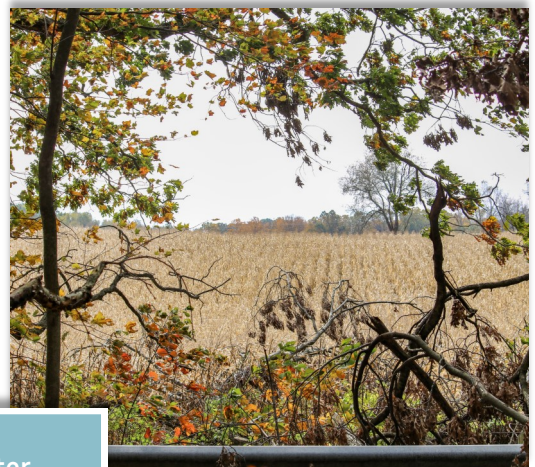
Conserve the natural features and character of Township lands by protecting undeveloped open spaces.

GOAL: Connect Nature and People

Advance a greenway network that connects natural features and people to community and regional destinations.

GOAL: Enhance Rural Character

Enhance the rural character of the Township through the preservation of natural features that strengthen the desirability of our community as a place to live, work, and recreate.

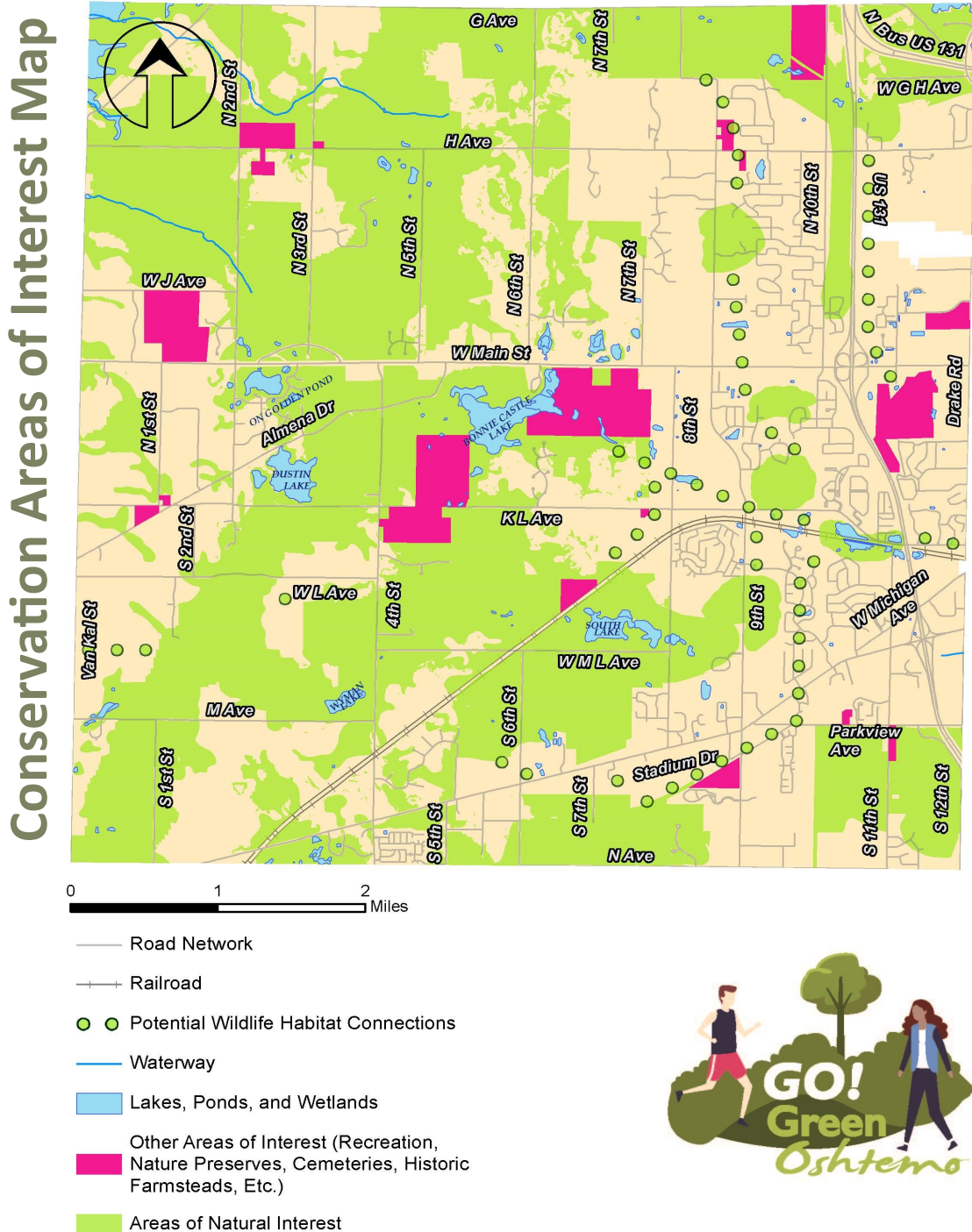


Conservation of Rural Character

Conservation Implementation

Conservation of properties is a new endeavor for the Township and therefore much of the work during this 5-year Plan period will be establishing priorities, developing criteria, and field work. With that said, the Township will capitalize on any opportunity to work with residents, developers, and conservation partners to preserve lands. The Conservation Areas of Interest Map outlines the areas of priority for conservation in the Township.

In addition to assisting residents, developers, and conservation partners with land conservation, the Township also hopes to establish catalyst projects as part of this Plan. The acquisition of property will be contingent on the Township securing state and/or local grants.



COLLECTIVE PLAN GOALS

These goals and associated action strategies are intended to be broadly focused and generally touch on all aspects of the Go! Green Oshtemo effort.

GOAL: Enhance Partnerships

Enhance partnerships with community organizations, governmental units, and civic groups, and work towards better public/private partnerships with the development community to improve recreation and conservation opportunities.

GOAL: Lead by Example

Make Oshtemo a leader in environmental conservation and sustainability and strive to reduce the Township's impact on the local and global environment.

GOAL: Sound Fiscal Management

Develop stable sources of funding and practice sound fiscal management of the parks, recreation, conservation, and nonmotorized systems.



Good Times in Oshtemo Township

APPENDIX D: PARKS AND RECREATION ACTION PLAN

Goals

The following goals are specific to the development, maintenance, and operation of the existing parks in the Township, as well as the acquisition and improvement of new parks. These are long range goals, many of which will require more time than the 5-years allotted to this plan to achieve. It is the intent of the Township to continually work towards realizing this future vision.

GOAL: Acquisition

Explore land acquisition opportunities to develop new parks.

Action Strategies:

- A. Focus land acquisition efforts for parks in the urbanized area of the Township.
- B. Concentrate acquisition efforts on the development of neighborhood or mini-parks, with an acreage size between one and ten acres.
- C. As the Township continues to develop, provide for future park development and more uniform distribution of facilities, in terms of both geography and population.
- D. Work towards ensuring that the majority of Oshtemo residents within the urbanized area of the Township are within ½ mile of a park.

GOAL: Accessibility and Diversity

Provide a diversity of recreational opportunities, both active and passive, that meet the needs of all segments of Oshtemo's population.

Action Strategies:

- A. Incorporate amenities and facilities missing in Township parks or identified as a priority by the community such as walking/biking paths, basketball courts, pickleball courts, and a spray park.
- B. Maintain a logical balance between active and passive pursuits in the parks, to address the recreation needs of all users.
- C. Seek citizen input when designing park and recreation facilities and programs, especially from children and families when designing playgrounds and youth-oriented recreation facilities and from seniors to address the specific needs of the aging population.
- D. Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions to provide a wider diversity of recreation opportunities that help to meet the needs of Oshtemo residents.
- E. Explore opportunities, such as updating Township ordinances, to require developers to provide private recreation facilities within new developments.

GOAL: Exceptional Park Experience

Deliver an exceptional park user experience through proper maintenance and continuous improvements, recognizing that our parks are a source of community pride.

Action Strategies:

- A. Annually assess and update the Long-Term Capital Maintenance Forecast to assist with projecting recreational facility replacement and operational needs.
- B. Continue to evaluate improvements needed to enhance universal access that provide equal levels of experiences for all age groups and abilities and their specific recreational needs.
- C. Review the Township's park rules and policies and routinely seek public input and feedback on ways they might be improved.
- D. Develop a system to encourage park users to report maintenance issues and other concerns.
- E. Explore opportunities to establish a greater staff presence in the parks during busy times, to enforce park rules, ensure a welcoming environment, and increase safety.
- F. Consider ways to simplify and improve the reservation system and web-based interactions.
- G. Continue to repair and renew facilities at existing parks, such as the disc golf course at Township Park, which is heavily used and showing signs of deterioration.
- H. Continue to restore and maintain the unique historic amenities like the Drake Farmstead, Community Center, Grange Hall, etc. that are managed by the Parks Department.
- I. Explore nature-based play opportunities where children can engage with the natural environment.
- J. Pursue opportunities to bring art into the parks.

GOAL: Environmental Stewardship

Foster environmental stewardship through the preservation of important natural features and sustainable design practices within parks, supporting efforts to make Oshtemo a leader in environmental conservation.

Action Strategies

- A. Develop programs for the "greening" and naturalization of the parks and facilities through improvements such as:
 - field maintenance;
 - reestablishment of native trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers;
 - storm water improvements;
 - lighting upgrades; and,
 - energy audits.
- B. Preserve natural features during design and development of park sites to the maximum extent feasible, in consideration of the type of park planned.
- C. Collaborate with adjoining property owners to coordinate environmental stewardship efforts in areas such as Township Park, Lillian Anderson Arboretum, and adjacent environmentally sensitive lands.

- D. Restore and preserve natural areas in the parks to improve habitat, prevent the spread of invasive species, and increase the enjoyment of park users.

GOAL: Development of Existing Facilities

Continue progress towards development of existing park facilities in established and undeveloped Township park land.

Action Strategies:

- A. Develop a long-range master plan for the property owned by the Township and Kalamazoo County located on KL Avenue just east of 4th Street, to meet future needs.
- B. Continue to implement the park master plans for Drake Farmstead Park, Flesher Field, and Township Park.
- C. Develop and implement a plan to provide additional outdoor recreation facilities at Grange Hall.
- D. Develop and provide educational programs with a focus on nature and history at the Drake Farmstead Park.

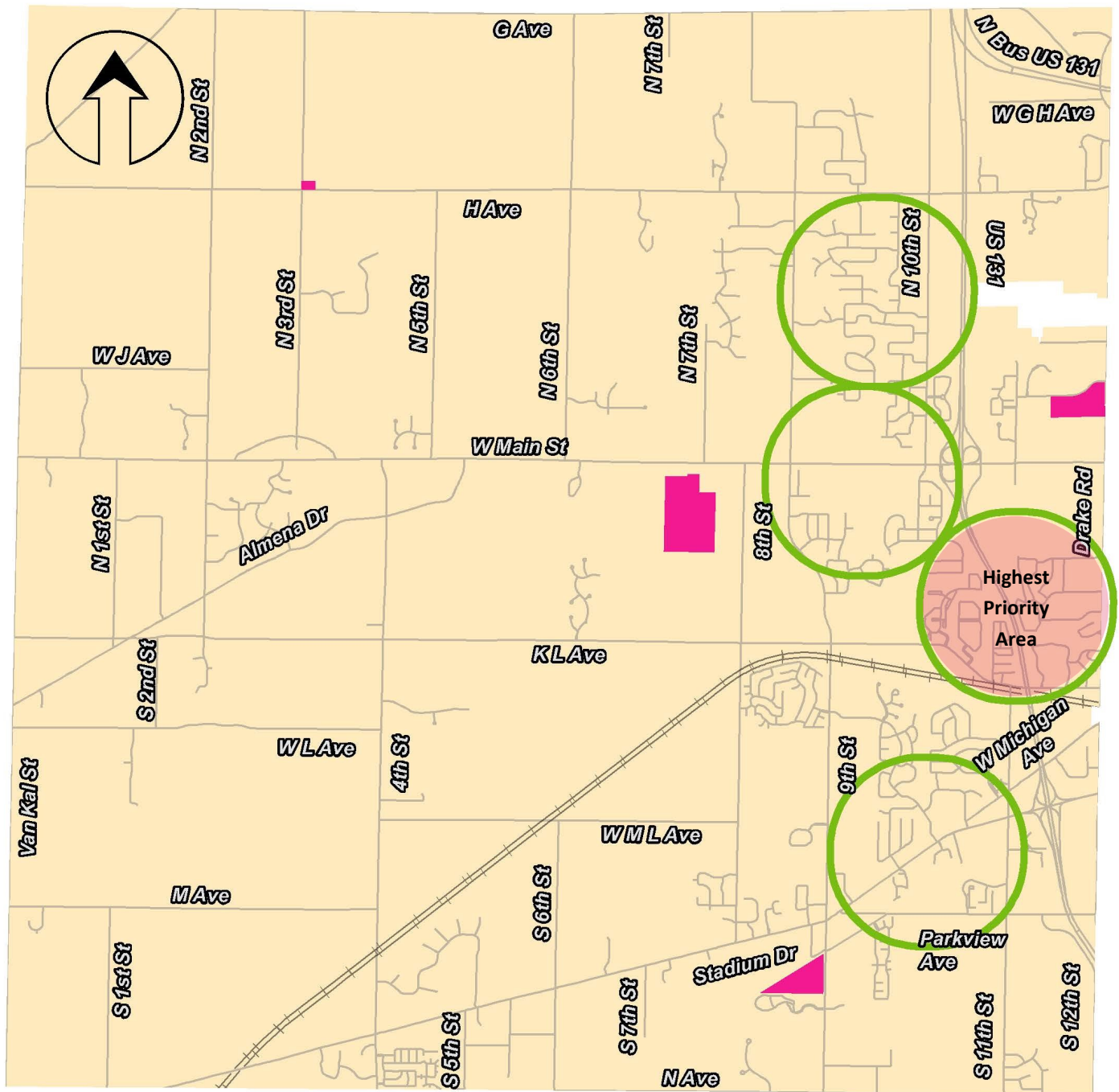
Parks and Recreation Anticipated Projects

To ensure movement towards achieving the Goals outlined above, the Township anticipates completing a number of capital improvement projects over the course of this 5-year Plan. To see these projects to fruition, many will need support of both State and local grant dollars. These projects include:

New Parks

Based on the MDNR's suggested classification system for parks, the Township is lacking in neighborhood and/or mini parks. In addition, as shown in this Plan, the residents of the Township have indicated a desire for additional parks in the more densely populated areas of the community. The Township hopes to address this issue with the acquisition of property within the priority areas outlined in the Neighborhood Park Priority Map. This map utilizes the information provided in the Trends and Needs section of the Plan to assist with the selection of the Priority Areas. These areas were determined based on population density and distance to the existing Township community parks. It is anticipated that the Township will work towards acquiring property, developing concept plans, and then constructing the park facilities within the time period of this Plan.

Neighborhood Park Priority Areas



0 1 2 Miles

- Road Network
- Railroad
- Existing Township Park
- Neighborhood Park Focus Area



Existing Parks

Drake Farmstead Park:

As a new park in the Township, there are a number of items from the Drake Farmstead Park Plan which are still to be developed. The Township will continue to improve the Carriage Barn, which will be constructed in 2019, to assist with accessible design, such as wall-mounted handicap door push buttons. Also, there is an ongoing relationship with the Oshtemo Historical Society to support the continuing restoration activities to the historic Drake House, including the improvements to the heating and cooling system. Finally, continual implementation of the Drake Farmstead Park Plan will be a focal point during this 5-Year Plan. This will include picnic shelters, outdoor classroom, trails, interpretive signs, gravel parking lot, improvements to the existing driveway, development of a new access point to Croyden Road, gazebo, event lawn, educational garden, and new storage shed.

Flesher Field:

The new facilities to be developed in Flesher Field would include a basketball court, trail improvements, parking lot extension, and the expansion of the existing playground to include music, water, or traditional play equipment. In addition, the Township intends to develop a forest management plan for the underutilized 12-acre wooded area of the park to control invasive species and improve wildlife habitat.

Township Park:

One of the most utilized facilities within Township Park is the disc golf course. The Township intends to complete course improvements, particularly signage and erosion control measures. All other improvements to the Park will include upgrades/refurbishments to the asphalt paths, trails, playground equipment, picnic shelters and tables, restroom buildings. Finally, the tennis and basketball courts will receive a new clear coat, seal, and striping to include new pickleball courts. New nets will also be furnished.

Community Buildings

The Township owns two community buildings, the Community Center and Grange Hall, which are managed by the Parks Department. The improvements planned for these structures include:

- Grange Hall - heating and cooling upgrades.
- Community Center - heating and cooling upgrades, and roof replacement.

APPENDIX E: NONMOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

Goals

The goals and action strategies for the nonmotorized plan are intended to establish a physical and cultural environment that supports and encourages safe, comfortable, and convenient ways for a wide spectrum of pedestrians and bicyclists to travel throughout the Township and into the surrounding communities.

GOAL: Connectivity

Increase connectivity between residential neighborhoods and nearby nonmotorized facilities to connect residents to commercial areas, employment, recreation, and public transportation.

Action Strategies:

- A. Fill the gaps within the existing nonmotorized facilities found within the Township to support accessibility and connectivity. Connect existing nonmotorized segments by filling gaps between them.
- B. Place an emphasis on connecting the east and west sides of the Township bisected by US-131 via bike paths and/or sidewalks, especially through coordination with MDOT when bridges crossing US-131 are rehabilitated or replaced.
- C. Provide connections to parks, neighborhoods, schools, and major areas of activity through neighborhood greenways and conservation trails or bicycle and pedestrian-focused corridors.
- D. Provide north-south bike path access from the Oshtemo Village District to the Kal-Haven Trail.
- E. Coordinate nonmotorized planning with neighboring communities.

GOAL: Safety and Accessibility

Provide for complete streets, as appropriate, on all Oshtemo roadways to emphasize safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel to all users of roadways.

Action Strategies:

- A. When road construction occurs, coordinate efforts with all involved road agencies to install sidewalks, bicycle paths/lanes, streetscapes, and other related improvements, as appropriate to the amount of roadwork, to maximize safety, efficiency, and cost effectiveness.
- B. Provide well-designed crosswalks to increase motorist awareness and pedestrian safety.
- C. Complete an ADA-transition plan to address known accessibility issues in the bike path and sidewalk network.
- D. Work with the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County to ensure proper roadway bicycle facilities, such as modifying roadway painting to extend existing bike lanes and widened shoulders through intersections.
- E. Develop and coordinate a nonmotorized path maintenance program.

GOAL: Planning

To achieve the goals noted above, incorporate nonmotorized best practices and recommendations into all relevant Township ordinances, policies, and plans.

Action Strategies:

- A. Assess existing policies, ordinances, regulations, and planning processes and identify changes that will further nonmotorized transportation.
- B. Ensure Township sidewalk and street standards comply with appropriate national guidelines, including AASHTO standards, to accommodate safe pedestrian, bicycle, barrier free, and vehicular uses.
- C. Establish a regular maintenance program for sidewalks, barrier-free facilities, pathways, and bicycle facilities and revise policies and/or ordinances accordingly.
- D. Implement the Township's Complete Streets Policy adopted in September of 2018 as it applies to all future infrastructure projects.
- E. Continue to require provisions for nonmotorized transportation facilities with site plan approval and seek appropriate easements when necessary.
- F. Pursue right-of-way, easements, and other private lands to allow for expansion of nonmotorized facilities.
- G. Review existing water and sewer easements to identify opportunities to upgrade the easements for nonmotorized facilities too.

GOAL: Education

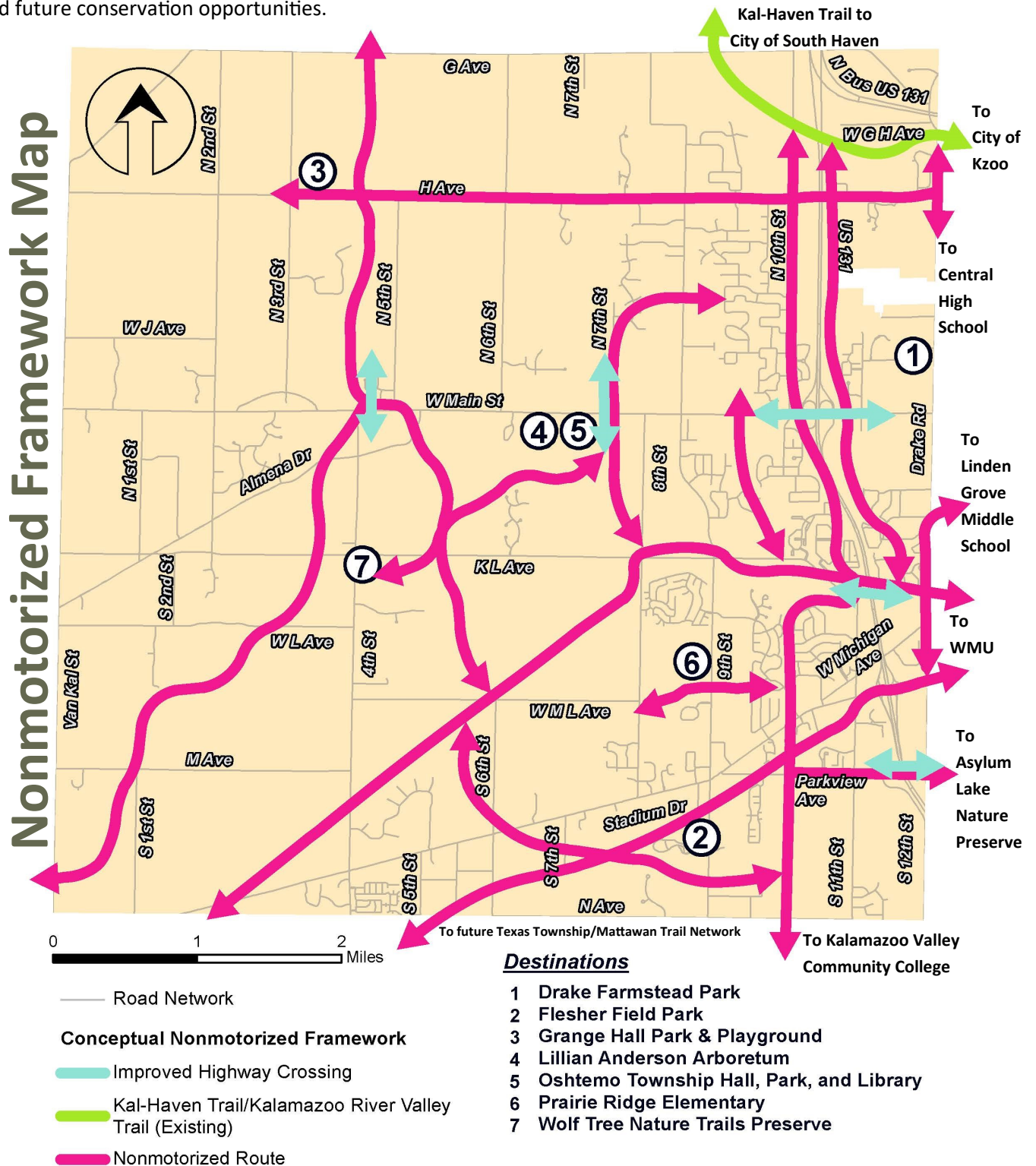
Increase awareness of the benefits of nonmotorized transportation and provide information regarding safe integration of motorized and nonmotorized modes of transportation.

Action Strategies:

- A. Promote the nonmotorized transportation plan to the general public and encourage the use of nonmotorized systems as an alternative mode of transportation.
- B. Develop strategies to educate the community on the benefits of nonmotorized transportation, key safety issues, and traffic laws.
- C. Develop a branding strategy to establish the Township as a nonmotorized friendly community.
- D. Partner with regional organizations to promote bicycling, running, and walking activities.

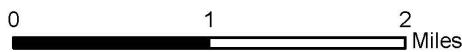
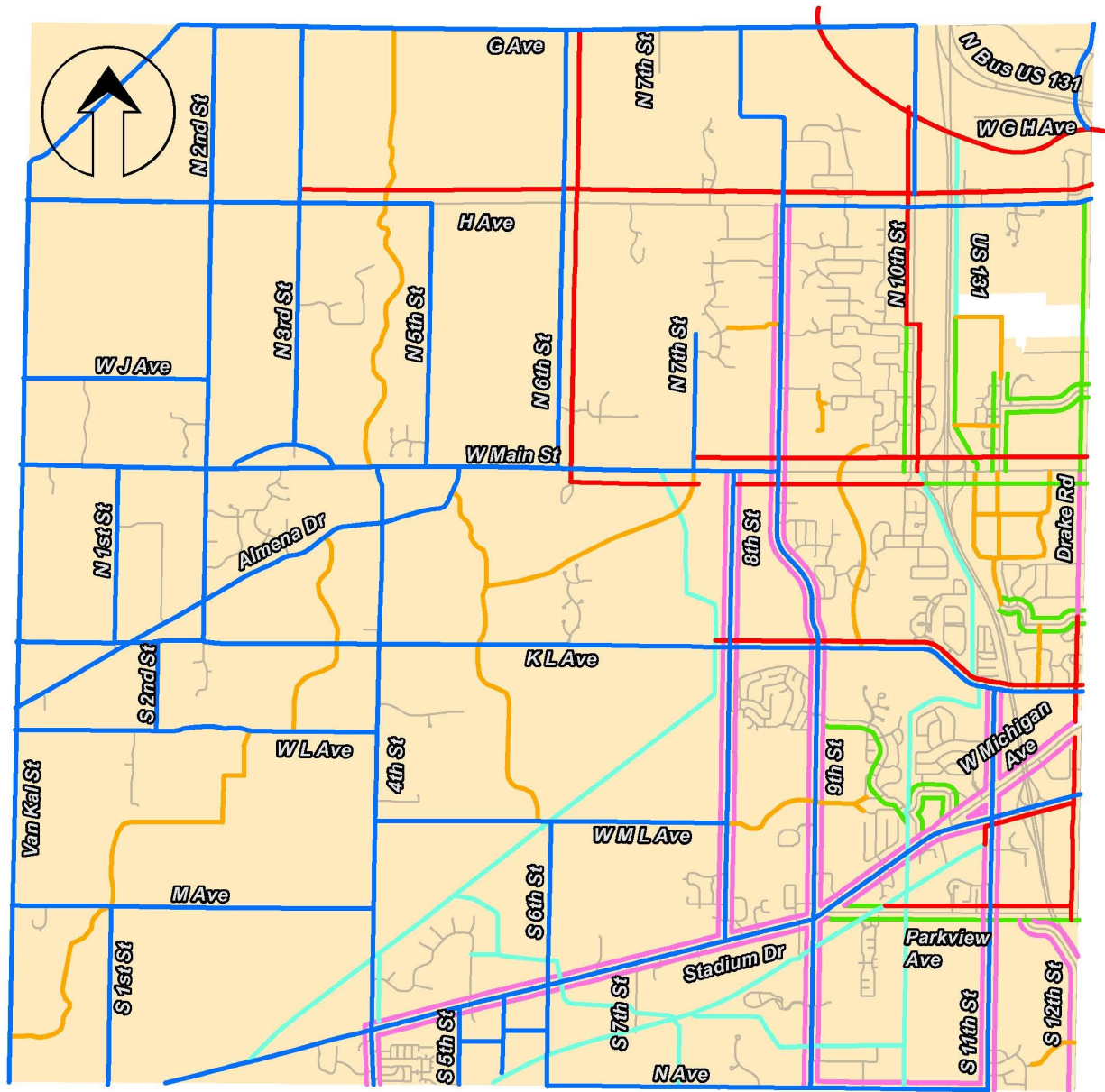
Nonmotorized Anticipated Projects

The GO! Green Oshtemo Plan is all about connections. Connecting our residents to those amenities that support and enhance the quality of life in Oshtemo Township. As a community that sustains both a suburban and rural environment, linking these dual characteristics is critical to enriching all lifestyles. The Nonmotorized Framework Map below provides that “big picture” plan; a high level illustration of how the future network may develop over time. It is intended to convey important linkages and how this system interacts with destinations, neighborhoods, commercial areas, and future conservation opportunities.



The Nonmotorized Transportation Network Map is intended to convey the full long-range plan of existing and envisioned facilities that will connect the entire Township. The goal of this map is to create a network of links to adjacent jurisdictions, provide access to destinations within and around the Township, and ensure a system of “loop connections” throughout the community.

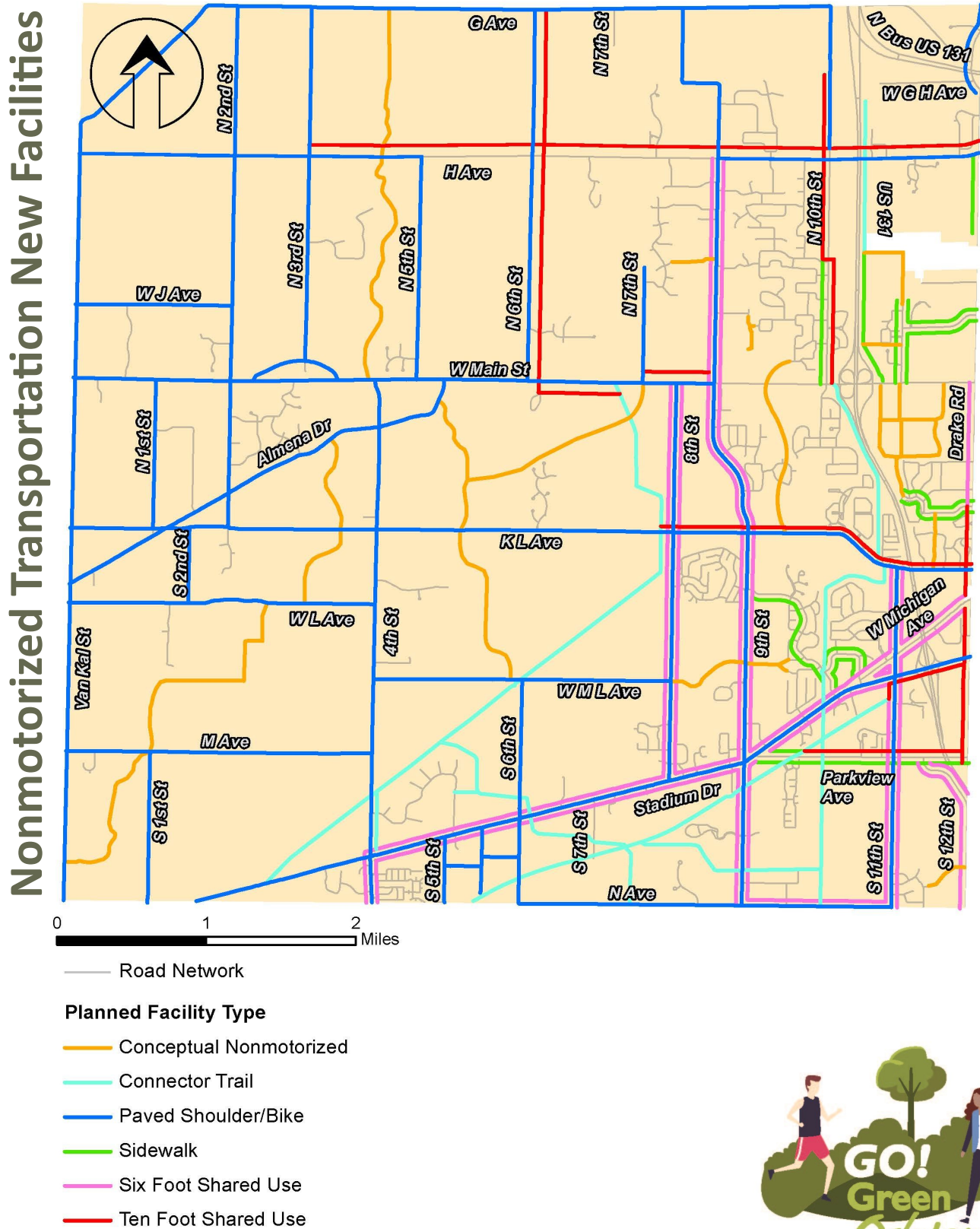
Nonmotorized Network Map



- Road Network
- Facility Type**
- Nonmotorized Link
- Connector Trail
- Paved Shoulder/Bike
- Sidewalk
- Six Foot Shared Use Path
- Ten Foot Shared Use Path



Finally, the Nonmotorized New Facilities Map provides both paths and sidewalks along roadways, as well as ideas for off-road connections intended throughout the Township. This is a long-range plan of envisioned facilities that will connect to existing infrastructure to support multi-modal transportation throughout the Township.



During the timeframe of this 5-year Plan, the Township has a number of nonmotorized projects planned. The major projects include the following:

Roadway Adjacent Facilities:

- Drake Road Shared Use Path - This path will be developed on the west side of Drake Road from West Main Street to Stadium Drive. It will include a 6-foot shared use path from West Main Street to Green Meadow Drive, where the path will transition to a 10-foot path through to Stadium Drive. This path is located along the eastern boundary of the Township and is a joint project with the City of Kalamazoo and the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County. It will provide a critical north/south link along the most densely populated areas of the Township, as well as two major retail districts of both Oshtemo and the City of Kalamazoo.
- 9th Street Shared Use Path - Located between Erie Street north to West Main Street, this project will likely be installed in two phases, the first phase between Erie Street and Quail Run Drive. This project is expected to be 6-foot one-way paths on both sides of the street. A portion of the 9th Street Shared Use Path is located in the Oshtemo Village, which is also the Downtown Development Authority district, who will help fund the project. This project will facilitate connecting both a public elementary school located on 9th Street and private elementary school found on Quail Run Drive to the wider nonmotorized networks in the Township.
- Stadium Drive Shared Use Path - This project includes a 6-foot one-way path on both sides of Stadium Drive from 11th Street moving west to 8th Street. This project will also be in two phases due to funding sources. A grant has been provided from the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study for the area between 11th Street and roughly Quail Run Drive. The remainder of the project is located within the Downtown Development Authority district, who will be seeking additional grants for the project. This is a critical component of both the Township and regional nonmotorized network. It will offer better access to the City of Kalamazoo and the retail and employment centers found within, as well as providing a link to the Oshtemo Village.
- KL Avenue Shared Use Path - The Township plans to construct a 10-foot wide shared-use facility along the north-side of KL Avenue from Drake Road west to Copper Beech Boulevard. The Township anticipates submitting an application to MDOT for Transportation Alternative Program grant funds. This path is another vital portion of the overall network. It will connect to Drake Road in an area of the Township with some of the highest population densities. In addition, there are ongoing pedestrian safety concerns in this area that the path will help to resolve.

Off-Road Facilities:

Currently, Oshtemo does not have any off-road facilities that are owned and maintained by the Township. The State owned Kal-Haven Trail facility, which connects the City of Kalamazoo to the City of South Haven, crosses Oshtemo near its northern boundary. As outlined in the Trends and Needs, residents of Oshtemo are interested in expanding the off-road trail network in the community. To accomplish this goal, the Township will likely begin with projects that are in within existing utility and/or other infrastructure corridors. Utilizing established easements and/or properties owned by a governmental or quasi-governmental entity, with the approval of the easement or property holder, can assist with the development of the trail. The first trail under consideration is the AT&T corridor that runs from Flesher Field Park southwest through the Township to the Texas Township border. This trail would support area residents with both recreation needs and connections to important destinations like Flesher Field and Oshtemo Village.

APPENDIX F: CONSERVATION ACTION PLAN

Goals

The goals and action strategies below are intended to provide both a long-range vision for the Township, as well as specific short-term action strategies that foster the burgeoning conservation efforts of the community.

GOAL: Conserve the Natural Environment

Conserve the natural features and character of Township lands by protecting undeveloped open spaces.

Action Strategies:

- A. Work with ecological partners to complete inventory mapping and field verification of plant biodiversity, and wild-life habitats and corridors in the Township.
- B. Develop a prioritization system of land conservation-based mapping completed through an assessment of preservation value and threat of loss.
- C. Prioritize the protection of wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and the headwaters of the river systems.
- D. Map existing open space properties that are deed restricted through the Open Space Community zoning ordinance or are privately deed/conservation restricted and identify possible greenway linkages between these lands.
- E. Develop incentive programs to conserve land within the Township. These programs should consider both the conservation of open space within proposed subdivision/site condominiums as well as incentivizing individual parcel owners to conserve land.
- F. Work with property owners to restore native ecosystems to the Oshtemo region through the development of programs with local conservation organizations.
- G. Establish operation and maintenance Best Management Practices (BMP's) for open space lands within the more developed areas of the Township.
- H. Develop a regional approach to conservation through partnerships with adjacent jurisdictions, conservation organizations, Kalamazoo County, Southcentral Michigan Planning Council, etc.
- I. Consider acquisition techniques, such as fee-title acquisitions, purchase of development rights, donations, or tax incentives.

GOAL: Connect Nature and People

Advance a greenway network that connects natural features and people to community and regional destinations.

Action Strategies:

- A. Develop a set of criteria for determining when greenway/open space lands should be permanently protected in their undeveloped state and when passive recreation should be permitted for the use and enjoyment of Oshtemo residents, promoting the balance between recreational opportunities and natural resource protection.

- B. Structure the passive recreational component of the greenway system so that connections to the larger Township nonmotorized plan provide linkages to local and regional destinations, particularly Oshtemo parks and other publicly accessible open spaces.
- C. Investigate opportunities for acquisition of undeveloped lands within the more urbanized area of the Township to allow for community open spaces and greenways where available natural areas may be scarce.
- D. Develop a generalized map for where acquisition of land/easements should be prioritized within the Township.
- E. Develop policies and practices for the maintenance and upkeep of the passive recreation greenways within the Township.
- F. Review current ordinances for improvements and investigate new techniques to minimize loss of natural features when new development occurs in the urbanized area to maintain a more naturalized environment.

GOAL: Enhance Rural Character

Enhance the rural character of the Township through the preservation of natural features that strengthen the desirability of our community as a place to live, work, and recreate.

Action Strategies:

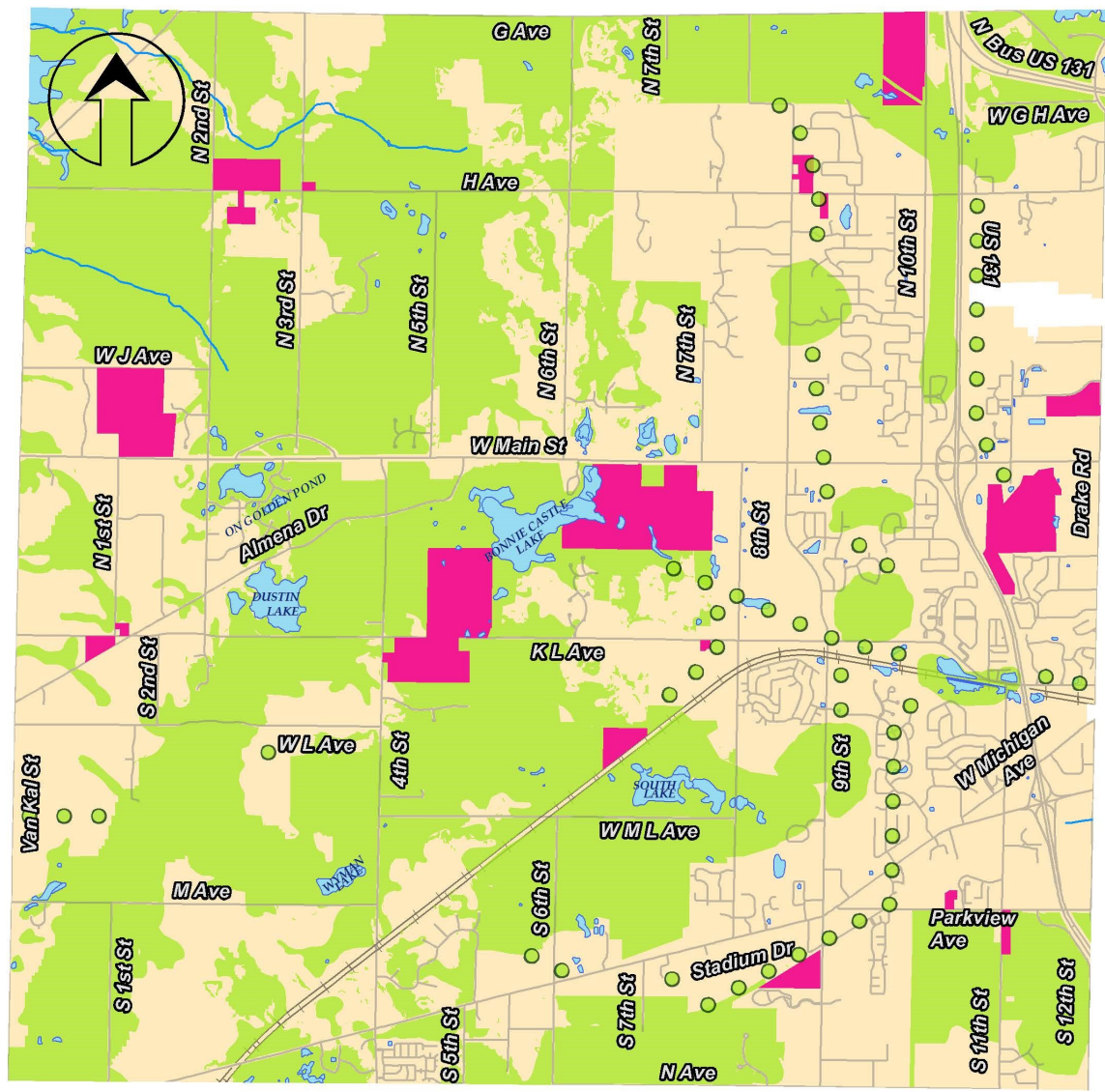
- A. Seek to create a network of Natural Beauty Roads through the State of Michigan program to support rural character and a healthy natural environment, via the establishment of natural buffer strips along the edges of primary and secondary roadways.
- B. Review existing “low impact development” ordinances for improvements and investigate new planning and design practices to simultaneously reduce infrastructure costs, conserve and protect natural resource systems, and reduce potential environmental impacts.
- C. Require management plans for the open space/conservation areas within new subdivision and site condominium projects.
- D. Continue to support the Future Land Use Plan of the Township’s Master Plan to direct appropriate growth in the more urbanized locations of the Township, allowing for the opportunity to preserve undeveloped parcels in the rural area of the community.
- E. Review current ordinances for improvements and investigate new techniques to minimize loss of natural features when new residential development occurs.

Conservation Anticipated Projects

Conservation of properties is a new endeavor for the Township and therefore much of the work during this 5-year Plan period will be establishing priorities, developing criteria, and field work. With that said, the Township will capitalize on any opportunity to work with residents, developers, and conservation partners to preserve lands. The Conservation Areas of Interest Map found on the following page outlines the areas of priority for conservation in the Township. These areas have been delineated based on the data provided in the Existing Condition Inventory and Trends and Needs sections of this Plan.

In addition to assisting residents, developers, and conservation partners with land conservation, the Township also hopes to establish one to two catalyst projects as part of this Plan. In the Township’s 2019-2024 Capital Improvement Plan, funding has been set aside for the acquisition of possibly two open space conservation areas. Property for these areas will be located within the part of the Township delineated in the Conservation Areas of Interest Map. The acquisition of these properties will be contingent on the Township securing state and/or local grants.

Conservation Areas of Interest



- Road Network
- +— Railroad
- ● Potential Wildlife Habitat Connections
- Waterway
- Lakes, Ponds, and Wetlands
- Other Areas of Interest (Recreation, Nature Preserves, Cemeteries, Historic Farmsteads, Etc.)
- Areas of Natural Interest



APPENDIX G: COLLECTIVE PLAN GOALS AND ACTION STRATEGIES

Goals

The goals and action strategies outlined below are intended to be broadly focused and generally touch on all aspects of the Go! Green Oshtemo effort. These goals focus on organizational and administrative functions rather than infrastructure or facility development.

GOAL: Enhance Partnerships

Enhance partnerships with community organizations, governmental units, and civic groups, and work towards better public/private partnerships with the development community to improve recreation and conservation opportunities.

Action Strategies:

- A. Develop a comprehensive list of community organizations involved in parks, recreation, and conservation and strengthen these partnerships to support recreation and outdoor activities in Oshtemo Township.
- B. Work with Friends of the Parks to develop and implement a parks and programming communication plan.
- C. Encourage greater volunteer participation in all aspects of parks, recreation, and conservation activities.
- D. Continue to build on the successful relationship with the Oshtemo Branch of the Kalamazoo Public Library by continuing to partner on projects and programs made possible by the library's close proximity to Township Park.
- E. Explore incentive opportunities to the private development community to include both private and public recreation opportunities within their development projects.
- F. Investigate volunteer opportunities and "adopt a mile" programs for the maintenance of the publicly accessible greenway system.
- G. Develop a volunteer group of environmental experts who will complete a natural features inventory for interested property owners, to both promote an understanding of the importance of conservation and to assist in the Township's efforts to map wildlife habitats and corridors.

GOAL: Sound Fiscal Management

Develop stable sources of funding and practice sound fiscal management of the parks, recreation, conservation, and nonmotorized systems.

Action Strategies:

- A. Explore the potential of a replacement and acquisition fund for maintenance of parks and recreation assets.
- B. Complete a comprehensive analysis of total costs related to the Township's rental facilities and establish cost recovery rates that will generate revenue for these expenditures.
- C. Pursue all available funding sources for acquisition, capital improvements, operations and maintenance, including local sources, the Township endowment, a parks and recreation millage, state and federal grant programs, local businesses, sponsorships, and other sources.

- D. Explore opportunities for greater private sector participation in the provision of recreation services in the Township.
- E. Continue to build the Oshtemo Parks and Recreation Endowment Fund.
- F. Assess and update the Long-Term Capital Maintenance Forecast as a budgeting tool.
- G. Explore funding opportunities that will assist the Township in leveraging capital for recreational greenways within the Township.

GOAL: Lead by Example

Make Oshtemo a leader in environmental conservation and sustainability and strive to reduce the Township's impact on the local and global environment.

- A. Structure the passive recreational component of the greenway system so that connections to the larger Township nonmotorized plan provide linkages to local and regional destinations, particularly Oshtemo parks and other publicly accessible open spaces.
- B. Investigate opportunities for acquisition of undeveloped lands within the more urbanized area of the Township to allow for community open spaces and greenways where available natural areas may be scarce.
- C. Develop a generalized map for where acquisition of land/easements should be prioritized within the Township.
- D. Develop policies and practices for the maintenance and upkeep of the passive recreation greenways within the Township.
- E. Review current ordinances for improvements and investigate new techniques to minimize loss of natural features when new development occurs in the urbanized area to maintain a more naturalized environment.