



charter township

oshtemo

est. 1839

To advance the quality of life of all residents through a commitment to responsible growth, and value-driven municipal services that promote the relationships among economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and social equity. (Adopted 2/14/2017)

NEWSLETTER

March 2019

Oshtemo Township Board of Trustees

Supervisor
Libby Heiny-Cogswell 216-5220
libbyhc@oshtemo.org

Clerk
Dusty Farmer 216-5224
dfarmer@oshtemo.org

Treasurer
Grant Taylor 216-5221
gtaylor@oshtemo.org

Trustees
Cheri L. Bell 372-2275
cbell@oshtemo.org
Deb Everett 375-4260
deverett@oshtemo.org
Zak Ford 271-5513
zford@oshtemo.org
Ken Hudok 359-0787
khudok@oshtemo.org

Township Department Information

Assessor:
Kristine Biddle 216-5225 assessor@oshtemo.org

Fire Chief:
Mark Barnes 375-0487 mbarnes@oshtemo.org

Ordinance Enf:
Rick Suwarsky 216-5227 rsuwarsky@oshtemo.org

Parks Director:
Karen High 216-5233 khigh@oshtemo.org
Rental Info 216-5224 oshtemo@oshtemo.org

Planning Director:
Julie Johnston 216-5223 jjohnston@oshtemo.org

Public Works:
Marc Elliott 216-5236 melliott@oshtemo.org

Township Customer Service Hours

Monday thru Thursday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Friday
8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
(1st Thurs of each month at 9 a.m.)

(269) 375-4260

We will be CLOSED

May 27– Memorial Day
July 4 and 5 - Independence Day

Welcome New Oshtemo Township Board Members



Cheri Bell, a lifelong resident of Oshtemo Township, joined the Board in January of this year. Cheri has experience working on the Oshtemo Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Commission, and Parks Committee. As a graduate of Mattawan Consolidated Schools and Western Michigan University, she has a strong commitment to our community. Cheri is currently Regional Director of Development for Planned Parenthood of Southwest Michigan and was formerly a Constituency Services Director for the 60th District.

Grant Taylor, formerly the Deputy Treasurer in Oshtemo, steps into the role of Treasurer with enthusiasm and knowledge of our process. He has been a resident in Oshtemo for 10 years, and began working for the Township as an assistant to the Clerk and Treasurer in March of 2017 and became the Deputy Treasurer within months. Since beginning his employment with Oshtemo, Grant has become a Certified Municipal Investor and is working toward becoming a Certified Municipal Treasurer.



PROOF OF RESIDENCY REQUIRED FOR SERVICES



2019 Dump Day Schedule

Township Hall Parking Lot
7275 W. Main St. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Yard waste, kitchen garbage, dead animals, hazardous materials, or large quantities of building materials cannot be accepted.


March 30	April 13 and 27
May 11 and 25	June 29
July 27	August 31
September 28	October 26
November 23—LAST DAY	

Fall Leaf Drop Off Days
Nov 9 and 23




Shred Days
10 AM-NOON
April 20
September 14

BLOOD DRIVE NEWS



April 24, 2019
11 a.m.—5 p.m.



February's Prize Winner—Don Carpenter

Appointments can be made with Michigan Blood by phone 1-866-MIBLOOD or e-mail info@miblood.org

CONNECT TO ROAD COMMISSION OF KALAMAZOO COUNTY ALERTS




Have You Signed Up?

Receive Message Alerts for:

- ◆ Road Construction
- ◆ Road Closures/Detours
- ◆ General Public News

RCKC CONNECT
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Visit : www.kalamazooountyroads.com

 Follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/oshtemotownship/> or sign up at www.oshtemo.org to receive notifications and updates via email



From Supervisor Libby Heiny-Cogswell:

The Supervisor, as described by Kenneth Verberg in Managing the Modern Michigan Township, “has the license to inquire into virtually all affairs of Township government and make proposals (to the Board) to resolve township problems.” In the following highlights, my aim is to make the best use of resources for the benefit of the Township.

We are continuing to implement prioritized portions of updated parks, non-motorized, and conservation plans, to benefit overall health and safety. No new Department of Natural Resources park grant applications are foreseen in 2019, although overall strategic efforts continue.

The Supervisor and HR staff are working to analyze Township staffing in order to retain, adjust, and plan for succession. The recent change of Treasurers led to shifting streetlight maintenance and installation from the Treasurer’s Office to Public Works. The reasons why the Treasurer was responsible for maintaining streetlights is lost in history, although some of our longtime residents may know why. Along with other new year’s resolutions, the Supervisor explored Township staff wellness opportunities, to identify cost-effective initiatives such as scheduled lunch, after work walks, and donated fresh fruit availability in the staff kitchen. The fruit is getting eaten, so after three weeks, consider it a success!

Along with the Police Committee, the Supervisor continues research and critical review to determine the approach for long term police protection.

A newly formed group of citizens, professionals, staff, and subset of the Board have begun a critical appraisal of Oshtemo operations. The groups mission statement outlines their intent: “Identify issues and explore resolutions to the concerns that impede the Township’s ability to fulfill our community vision.” Analysis has begun of Oshtemo’s operations and expenses in relation to similar communities and to our municipal partners. The information is intended to provide insight to the full Board to assist with policy decisions that impact the Oshtemo community. Governmental responsibilities like police protection, control and maintenance of road rights-of-way, and overall municipal governance will be examined. Oshtemo citizens started the ball rolling on these discussions when residents requested sewer extensions and non-motorized paths. If you have suggestions, please call, set up an appointment, or stop in during Supervisor’s upcoming open office hours, Monday April 8th, from 12-2 pm. This is your Township. We welcome your ideas.



From Clerk Dusty Farmer: VOTER REGISTRATION UPDATE

In November of 2018, voters in Michigan approved Proposal 3, which provides for many changes to our voting process. Changes to voter registration, absentee balloting, postings, and election inspector processes are in our near future, and my Deputy and I will complete the required training for that later this year. We did, however, receive updated information regarding voter registration, and we are excited to share it with Oshtemo voters. The biggest change for which we are receiving the most questions is for voter registration. We will share some information about that here, and we ask that you look for updates on our website, future newsletters, and through Facebook or Nextdoor.

Voters may now register to vote up to and on Election Day here in Michigan, rather than having to be registered 30 days before the election. Those wanting to register to vote can do so in person at a Secretary of State office, a clerk’s office, or by mail up until the 15th day before an election. If a person is registering to vote within 14 days of an election, including on Election Day, and they want to vote in the new location, they must register in-person at their local clerk’s office and provide proof of residency. Other than a picture ID with current address, these documents are also accepted: current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, other government document.

As always, if you have any questions regarding elections or registration, please reach out to either our office at 216-5224 or dfarmer@oshtemo.org, or the Bureau of Elections at 1-800-292-5973.



From Treasurer Grant Taylor:

As the newly appointed Treasurer, I am excited to take on this new role for the residents of Oshtemo. I look forward to providing the same top-tier level service that you know and expect. While I begin my journey of learning and planning for this new role, I want to take this opportunity to thank former Treasurer Culp for her many years of service to the Township as both a staff member and elected official.

Nancy has been a devoted public servant to the citizens of Oshtemo for over 30 years. In that time, she has worked hard as an administrative assistant, Deputy Treasurer, and elected Treasurer. She achieved about every certification a municipal treasurer can achieve and has been a source of knowledge for many new Treasurers in Kalamazoo County, myself included. I know filling her shoes will be a difficult task, but with the support of my of Oshtemo staff, I am confident the Oshtemo Treasurer’s Office will continue successfully. Thank you, Nancy, for all of the years you have dedicated to the people of Oshtemo. I am proud to call you a mentor and friend.

Parks Department—



Promote your business in Oshtemo!

Local businesses are invited to sponsor our summer concert series at Flesher Field. Sponsors may bring banners, brochures, or giveaways to our three free, family-friendly concerts. Organized by the Oshtemo Friends of the Parks, the concerts are an opportunity for businesses to support the community while building relationships with residents. Four levels of sponsorship are available, ranging from \$200 to \$750. For more details on sponsorships, contact Parks Director Karen High at khigh@oshtemo.org or (269) 216-5233.

Planning an April Shower?

Whether it's for baby or bride, Oshtemo Township makes it easy to host a shower or other special event. With two historic buildings for rent, we offer affordable and unique settings for any party. The newly renovated **Grange Hall**, now barrier free, is spacious and ready for your unique décor. It includes a kitchen, tables, and chairs. A playground and basketball court outside will help keep the kids entertained. At the charming **Oshtemo Community Center**, two party rooms feature tables, chairs, microwave and mini-frig. Rent one or both rooms, depending on the size of your event. April is the Community Center's busiest month, so make your reservation soon! Alcohol is permitted with restrictions. Discounted rental rate available for Oshtemo residents. For a rental application and availability calendar, visit oshtemo.org/parks-and-recreation-facilities/ Or call the Township Hall at (269) 375-4260 to make your reservation.



Save the Date!

Join us at the Flesher Field gazebo this summer for three free, family-friendly concerts. To add to the fun, we'll have free craft projects and other activities for kids. Picnics are welcome, and food will be available for purchase. This year's dates and performers are:

June 23 – Yolonda Lavender, talented singer/songwriter, composer, arranger and performing artist whose sound is soul-based with gospel, R&B, hip-hop, blues and jazz influences.

July 14 – Schlitz Creek Bluegrass Band, performing a high-energy stage show with hot pickin' and smooth vocalizations. Their repertoire includes standard bluegrass tunes as well as a collection of refreshing and unusual choices for a bluegrass band.

August 18 – Kanola Band, a New Orleans style jazz ensemble led by trumpeter Benje Daneman. This high-spirited music will have you snappin' your fingers and tappin' your toes!



Donate Now for the Future of Our Parks

If you know and love Oshtemo's parks, help us preserve and maintain them for future generations. Please consider donating to the Oshtemo Township Parks and Recreation Fund at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation. Proceeds from the Fund are used solely for park acquisition, improvements, and maintenance. It's easy to donate! Visit the Kalamazoo Community Foundation website at <http://www.kalfound.org>. Select the Give Now button at the top of the screen, then enter 'Oshtemo' in the search box. Select Oshtemo Township Parks & Recreation Fund and follow the prompts for billing and payment information. Thank you!

Oshtemo Police—

Crime prevention tips:

KCSO wants to remind Oshtemo residents that we are still working several mail theft incidents throughout Oshtemo and Kalamazoo County. Since there are multiple groups and individuals committing these thefts we urge you not to place your outgoing mail in your mailboxes. We suggest taking it to the post office or to a secure blue box for mailing.

We have also taken several telephone scam fraud cases. KCSO wants to remind citizens to not give out any personal information over the phone (credit card numbers, social security numbers, pins numbers, etc.).

It might be a scam if:



- They contact you first
- They want cash only
- They use phrases like: hurry, today only, last chance, you must act now
- Sounds too good to be true
- They need your credit card number, bank account, or check number
- Lastly they attempt to scare you into giving them your information

Always check companies out through the **Better Business Bureau**.

POLICE PROTECTION—UPDATE

Although the Board scaled back an administrative portion of the police protection contract in 2019, Oshtemo continues its police protection services contract with the County and Sheriff's Office. **If you have an emergency call 911.** For non-emergency police issues, call dispatch at 269-488-8911. And to reach or visit the Sheriff's Office at 1500 Lamont Ave. to obtain police report copies, etc, call 269-383-8821. Neighborhoods interested in forming a Neighborhood Watch group should contact Sergeant Juvon Johnson via email at jjjohn@kalcounty.com

CONSOLIDATED DISPATCH—UPDATE

Consolidated dispatch is now a reality throughout all municipalities in Kalamazoo County, including Oshtemo. **MANY CONGRATULATIONS** to the individuals and municipal organizations who, over several decades, brought this critical public safety improvement to fruition. The new KCCDA, as it is known, is located on Stadium Drive at South 8th Street. The former Consumers Credit Union headquarters was already served with dual fiber optic, among other cost-saving features. Firefighters and others began working with the integrated dispatch center in late Fall, and the many emergency response professionals continue to visit the facility to become fully versed in its operation. If you need to reach **non-emergency dispatch, call 269-488-8911.**

It is the intention of Oshtemo Township to work alongside other townships and the dispatch authority to stay apprised of the development and implementation of the long term funding strategy. This funding plan will be different than in past years. Oshtemo anticipates, since this is a new dispatch agreement, that all participating entities will pay a proportional charge. Our estimates indicate this could even be up to \$400K for Oshtemo. Options to fund dispatch include a voter-considered phone surcharge, which some consider the fairest of several options. Another long-term funding option is a voter-considered millage. If neither of these options moves forward, a direct charge to all townships, cities, and villages is the likely funding solution as written in the agreement. A direct charge is used in Calhoun County and, in their example, is proportional based upon population. If a direct charge occurs, Oshtemo must then pay the amount from general township operating or special assessment (SAD) funds.

Ordinance Enforcement—

It has been quite the winter but spring is on the way! It's almost time to begin clearing leaves and other debris. Keep in mind that the Township offers a monthly dump day for some larger items. Dates are included on the front of this newsletter.

This is also a time when noise levels start going up. Please keep in mind we have an Excessive Noise Ordinance. While we begin opening windows for spring cleaning and turning up the music to get moving, please be mindful of your neighbors. This also includes excessive noise from animals.

Oshtemo Fire and Rescue—

Fire Hydrant Flow Testing, Maintenance and Identification Upgrade

Twice a year the Kalamazoo City Water Department flushes our system to ensure that sediments are washed from the network of distribution pipes and associated valves. Spring flushing is tentatively scheduled for April 21 – 30th. Once that is completed, Oshtemo Fire and Rescue will begin a summer long project that will entail flow testing, visually inspecting, and performing some routine maintenance to the over 1,000 fire hydrants in Oshtemo Township. In addition, we will be installing reflective markers or “flags” on each of them.



The flow testing will allow us to capture current data to confirm that each of the hydrants provides the predicted gallons per minute. To accomplish this, we will be employing a diffuser designed to break up the discharging flow of water which will reduce the possibility of washing away nearby property. The diffuser also has the needed built-in and calibrated PSI gauge for accuracy.

Our visual inspection will identify a number of items, including the overall condition of the fire hydrant, markings, the required 3’ of clearance, and the exact location compared to our GIS data and mapping program. The final step will involve some light maintenance as needed at each hydrant.

Finally, we will be installing new flags, provided by the City Water Department, onto the fire hydrant barrel. The current signs have been in practice for decades and do help our drivers to see the hydrant’s approximate location day and night. However, they are located more than 3’ away from the hydrant, so finding the actual hydrant when it is lost in overgrown brush or buried by snow, can take precious seconds/minutes.

Our firefighters will spend about 32 minutes per hydrant, for over 1,000 hydrants, to total over 570 hours of maintenance to ensure that your hydrant works for you when needed.

Public Works—

USDA Sewer Projects

Phase I of the USDA sewer extension project was expected to go out for bid in January 2019. However, the Federal government shutdown affected this work because we need the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to approve one easement for a sewer lift station. We are still waiting for HUD to approve the easement and will go out for bid as soon as we receive it.

Phase II of the USDA sewer extension project has started with survey crews working in the project areas. They will be placing wooden stakes with pink ribbons on them as temporary survey markers. When the weather turns and it is time to start sprucing up the yard, those stakes can be removed.



Water Quality

As discussed elsewhere in the newsletter, the Fire Department will be exercising fire hydrants this spring. This will cause minor flushing of the water main which could dislodge some corrosion products within the water main and result in temporary brownish water in your house. If this occurs, running the tap water for a few minutes will clear the brownish water. The City will also complete their regularly scheduled flushing of hydrants in mid-to-late April.

National Groundwater Awareness Week

National Groundwater Awareness Week is March 10-16, 2019. The water in the public water system all comes from groundwater. Learn more about groundwater and how to protect it at <http://www.ProtectYourWater.net>. We recommend watching the KRESA Contest Videos in the Media section made by local high school students.



Planning Department —

2018 Development Highlights

In the first quarter of each year, the Planning Department is responsible for generating an annual report for the Township Board documenting the activities of the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals during the previous year. Both of these Boards play a critical role in the growth and development of the Township, supporting the goals of the Master Plan as well as administering the regulations of the Zoning Ordinance.

In 2018, a total of 19 site plans were reviewed, of which 11 were for special land uses considered by the Planning Commission. The Township Zoning Ordinance designates certain uses as “special” to allow the Planning Commission the opportunity to mitigate any potential impacts on neighboring properties through the site plan process. In addition, five rezoning applications were deliberated by the Planning Commission, and ultimately approved by the Township Board.

Many of the projects approved by the Planning Commission in 2018 either have been constructed or are currently under development. The projects you may have noted around the Township include the following:

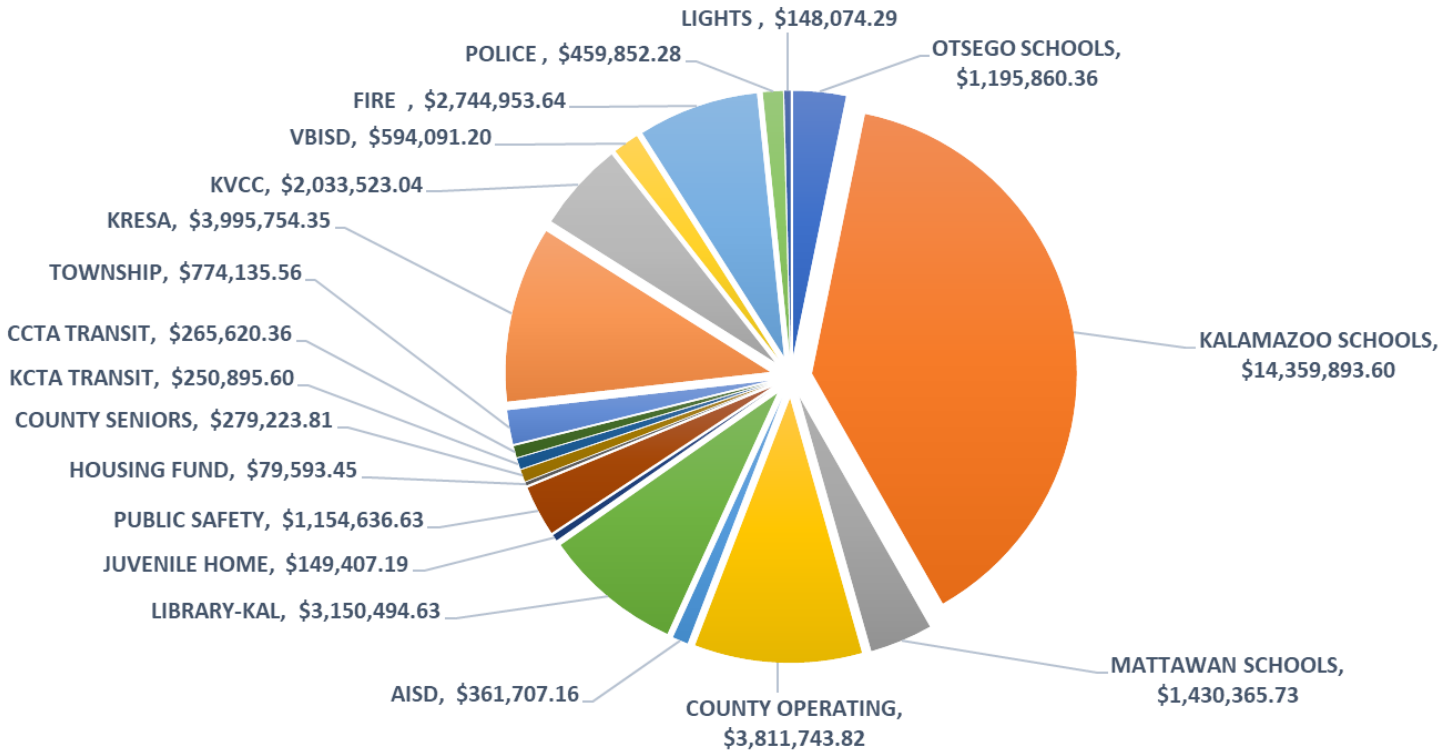
- The continued development of the new Holiday Inn, which is being constructed along US-131 north of West Main Street. This project is part of a larger planned unit development called Westgate, which is intended to include hotels, restaurants, retail, and office uses.
- The redevelopment of the Mangia restaurant to Jac’s Cekola’s Pizza within the Oshtemo Village at 3112 South 9th Street.
- D & R Sports, a long-standing business within Oshtemo Township located at 8178 West Main Street, received site plan approval to complete an expansion of their retail store. The Township expects this construction to begin in 2019.
- North Woods Village located at 6203 Stadium Drive, an assisted living and memory care facility, finished construction and opened for business in 2018.
- The Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch Authority is now in Oshtemo Township, located at 7040 Stadium Drive, which used to be a Consumers Credit Union building at the northwest corner of Stadium Drive and 8th Street.
- Metro Toyota recently purchased the Rykse’s restaurant property at 5924 Stadium Drive and received special use approval to expand their auto sales lot to this location. Metro Toyota intends to demolish the building and seek site plan approval from the Planning Commission in 2019.
- Three residential projects were approved in 2018, which included two single-family and one attached condominium project:
 1. Mystic Heights is a site condominium located east of Van Kal Road and north of Stadium Drive, and includes 38 new single-family lots.
 2. Autumn Grove is also a site condominium located west of North 9th Street and north of Wyndham Drive, and will include 18 single-family lots.
 3. Emberly Acres II, which is an extension of the existing Emberly Acres condominium located on the west side of 8th Street and north of Stadium Drive. The project includes five new buildings, which will contain three to four units each. A total of 17 new condominium units will be developed.

The Planning Commission meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month and the Zoning Board of Appeals meets the 4th Tuesday of the month. Agendas and minutes can be found on the Township’s website www.oshtemo.org. The public is encouraged to attend and any input is always appreciated. If you have questions about a development or agenda item, you are encouraged to contact staff prior to the meeting:

Julie Johnston, Planning Director
269-375-4260
jjohnston@oshtemo.org

Now that we are at the end of another Winter tax season, we receive many questions regarding where taxes go after they are collected in Oshtemo. Many times, residents are surprised that such a small amount of money is specifically for Oshtemo Township. Much of our tax money goes to support county-wide programs, libraries, schools/education, and transit. Here is a quick look at your tax dollars in action:

2018 Taxes Collected



Is Your Streetlight Out?

Streetlight outages can be reported directly to Consumers Energy by calling:
800-477-5050
Or through the link at www.oshtemo.org under the Frequently Asked Questions



Hiring a contractor making improvements on your property in 2019?

Decks, pools, sheds, and roofs need permits and might be subject to setback rules. Contact the Southwest Michigan Building Authority to find out which permit you need.
(269) 585-4150

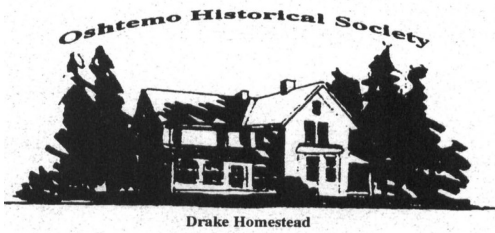
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911
ADDRESS
SIGNS
HELP
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LIVES

Do you have an Address Sign?

If you don't have an address number sign, they are available to order through the Township office for **\$10.00.**

Please contact Linda to place an order:
375-4260 or lpotok@oshtemo.org



OSHTEMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

We invite you to join us to learn about local history. Our programs are free and you do not need to be a member to attend. We meet at the Oshtemo Township Hall, 7275 W. Main St., unless otherwise stated.

Mark your Calendars for the following:

March 21st – Lynn Houghton, Regional Historian, and Karen High, Township Parks Director, will share information about **Oshtemo Township's Historic Cemeteries: Past, Present and Future.**

April 18th – **The Capital Women: 1879–1940** will be the topic for the presentation by Valerie Marvin, Michigan State Capitol Historian.

For more information about the Oshtemo Historical Society, please visit our website at www.oshtemohistoricalsociety.org

www.facebook.com/oshtemotownshi
www.oshtemo.org
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