

# OSHTEMO NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2024



## Parks Department

### Thank you to our dedicated volunteers!

Oshtemo Township is fortunate to have active, involved residents who are willing to help make our community a wonderful place to live, work, and play. These energetic folks serve on boards and committees, host community events, plant trees, remove invasive vegetation, and more.



If you are looking for ways to make new friends, engage with our community, and enjoy the outdoors, please contact Vanessa Street, Parks Director, at (269) 216-5233 or [vstreet@oshtemo.org](mailto:vstreet@oshtemo.org).

### Ways to get involved

It may be winter, but Oshtemo Friends of the Parks has begun planning another season of free outdoor concerts at Flesher Field Park. Volunteers are needed to help direct traffic, assist with set-up, and welcome concert attendees. Music in the Park is entirely funded by grants from the Michigan Arts & Culture Council and generous support from

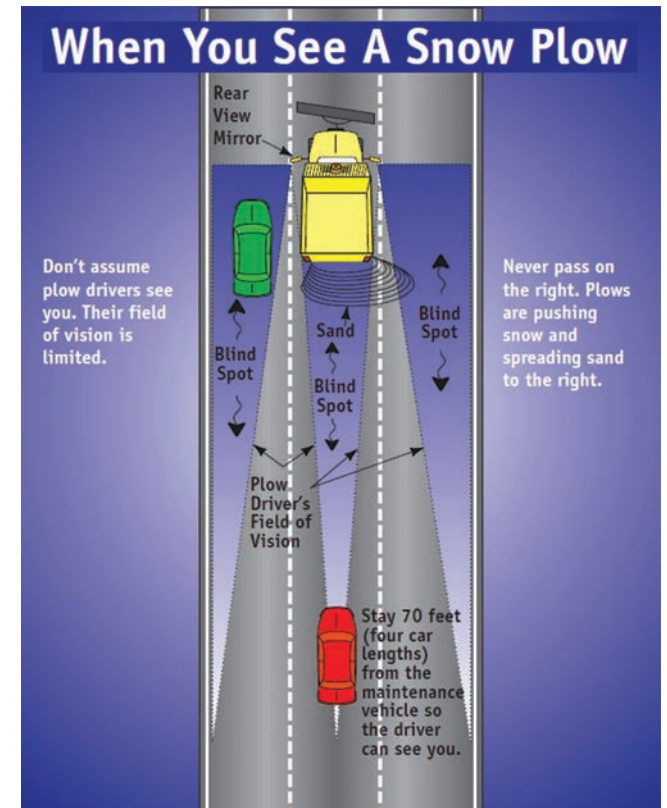
local businesses. Dates and performers for the 2024 concert series will be announced in the next newsletter and on the Township website.

Seniors – Looking for something to do this winter? Check out senior activities at The Oshtemo Community Center.



Activities are on Tuesdays (Card Games from noon to 3 p.m.) and Wednesdays (Chair Yoga from 1 to 2 p.m. with \$5 admission fee) and all seniors are welcome to attend. The Oshtemo Community Center is located at 6407 Parkview Ave. Advanced sign up is not needed. Volunteers are available to teach card games and lead yoga. Cancellations will be posted on the Oshtemo Township website calendar at [oshtemo.org](http://oshtemo.org).

Do you have ideas for senior activities? Do you have a skill, craft, or passion you would like to bring to our senior community? Interested volunteers are encouraged to contact Vanessa Street, Parks Director, at (269) 216-5233 or [vstreet@oshtemo.org](mailto:vstreet@oshtemo.org).



RCKC CONNECT  
RCKC ALERTS SIGN UP NOW

## Connect to Road Commission of Kalamazoo County Alerts

[kalamazoocountyroads.com](http://kalamazoocountyroads.com)

(269) 381-3171 | [info@kalamazoocountyroads.com](mailto:info@kalamazoocountyroads.com)

## Infrastructure News

### Non-Motorized Facilities

Oshtemo continues to proactively seek opportunities to fund and construct the non-motorized facilities outlined in the Master Plan/GO! Green Plan, Regional Metropolitan Transportation Plan (overseen by the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study [KATS]), and as desired by residents in the community survey.

### KL Ave Shared-Use Path

#### Phase 1 - Drake Road east side of US-131

Complete! We received \$240k in grant funds from Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

#### Phase 2 – east side of the US-131 bridge to the Paddock Apartments (north side)

We've received over \$1M in TAP grant funds from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). The projects are scheduled based on the coordination with the MDOT US-131 bridge over KL Avenue replacement project.

### Parkview Ave Shared-Use Path: 11th Street to Drake Road (north side)

The design has been coordinated with new roundabout projects. The township is working on the design over the bridge and plan to complete installation from Drake Road to Vienna Street in 2024.

### 9th Street Sidewalk: Stadium Drive to Quail Run Drive (west side)

Oshtemo was awarded a (TAP) grant for \$543k! We are currently finalizing the design and easements. Construction is expected to take place in late 2024 or summer 2025.

This sidewalk will connect multi-family areas (mobile home park, multiple apartment complexes, and condos) and single-family residences to multiple schools, credit unions, medical offices, and the Oshtemo DDA commercial area. This project will serve all types of non-motorized transportation and users as well as allow for intermodal access by including bus stops. It also achieves the complete streets policies of MDOT, KATS, the Kalamazoo County Road Commission, and Oshtemo Township.



### Drake Road Shared-Use Path: Stadium Drive to KL Avenue (west side) with Amtrak crossing

In collaboration with our partners which includes the City of Kalamazoo, MDOT, and Amtrak, railroad crossings will be installed in June 2024. Oshtemo will complete the rest of the project by the end of 2025. This project will use TAP grant funds and complete a large segment on Drake Road.

The planning commission completed an inventory and assessment of ALL existing non-motorized facilities in Oshtemo. This information will help plan for routine maintenance and identify gaps in the network.

## At Your Service

### From The Clerk's Office

In 2023, the Clerk's Office moved forward with the implementation of a record digitization project that will eventually encompass all Township documents. This allows for easier access to current and historical documents for both staff and the public.

We also began working with the new Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Specialist to incorporate mapping and access to our cemetery system. This gives access to residents who are interested in learning more about the availability of plots without having to come into the office.

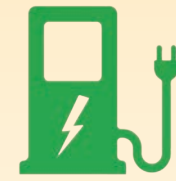
In addition, the Purchasing Policy for the Township was updated to focus on

electronic payments for vendors, shifting away from paper checks, to increase security for Township funds.

2023 was busier than expected, including three unscheduled elections. The coming year will be even busier with four elections and the implementation of Proposal 2. We look forward to the opportunities next year will bring.

We would like to thank our election inspectors. Their dedication to public service and democracy is the bedrock of our work. We have over 20 Absentee Counting Board Inspectors, 10 Precinct Chairs, and 100 precinct workers; many of whom have worked on elections in Oshtemo for more than 10 years.

We thank these individuals for their efforts this year and look forward to working with them again in 2024!



## Car Charging Station at Flesher Field

The Oshtemo Downtown Development Authority has donated an electric vehicle charging station with two charging ports to Flesher Field. The model installed is a Juicebox Enel X. Come charge your hybrid or electric car and enjoy all that Flesher Field and the surrounding businesses have to offer!

## Thank You

### Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals

Development in the Township is ongoing, and the volunteers serving on our development boards are crucial in ensuring development follows our adopted community vision. They are also key to the process of reviewing and updating our planning documents to ensure our community vision is up-to-date and accurate.

We want to thank these two boards for their hard work and dedication to Oshtemo!

**Planning Commission:** Phil Doorlag, Deb Everett, Zak Ford, Scot Jefferies, Micki Maxwell, Scott Makohn, Alistair Smith, Bruce VanderWeele, Chetan Vyas, Kizzy Bradford, Anna Versalle

**Zoning Board of Appeals:** Alistair Smith, Louis Williams, Harry Jachym, Fred Gould, Dusty Farmer, Rick Everett, Anita Smith

## Follow us on Facebook!

@oshtemochartertownship



## Looking to stay informed about development in Oshtemo? Don't have time to attend the Tuesday or Thursday afternoon public meetings?

You can watch Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings at any time online! Meeting agendas and packets are also available online! Scan the QR codes for access.



Scan for Virtual Meetings



Scan for Meeting Agendas

**Assessor Kristine Biddle**

(269) 216-5225 [assessor@oshtemo.org](mailto:assessor@oshtemo.org)

**Fire Chief Greg McComb**

(269) 375-0487 [gmccomb@oshtemo.org](mailto:gmccomb@oshtemo.org)

**Ordinance Officer Rick Suwarsky**

(269) 216-5227 [rswarsky@oshtemo.org](mailto:rswarsky@oshtemo.org)

**Parks Director Vanessa Street**

(269) 216-5233 [vstreet@oshtemo.org](mailto:vstreet@oshtemo.org)

**Planning Staff**

(269) 375-4260 [planning@oshtemo.org](mailto:planning@oshtemo.org)

**Public Works Dir. Anna Horner**

(269) 216-5236 [ahorner@oshtemo.org](mailto:ahorner@oshtemo.org)

## Featured Events in Oshtemo



## Senior Activities

### Tuesdays & Wednesdays

Activities are on Tuesdays (Card Games from noon to 3 p.m.) and Wednesdays (Chair Yoga from 1 to 2 p.m. with \$5 admission fee) and all seniors are welcome to attend. The Oshtemo Community Center is located at 6407 Parkview Ave. Advanced sign up is not needed. Volunteers are available to teach card games and lead yoga. Cancellations will be posted on the Oshtemo Township website calendar at [oshtemo.org](http://oshtemo.org).

### Oshtemo Community Center

6407 Parkview Avenue

Kalamazoo, Michigan

### Card Games - \$5 Admission

Tuesdays

12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

### Chair Yoga with Leslie - \$5 Admission

Wednesdays - 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

# Thank You: Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and South Drake Road Corridor Improvement Authority (SoDA)

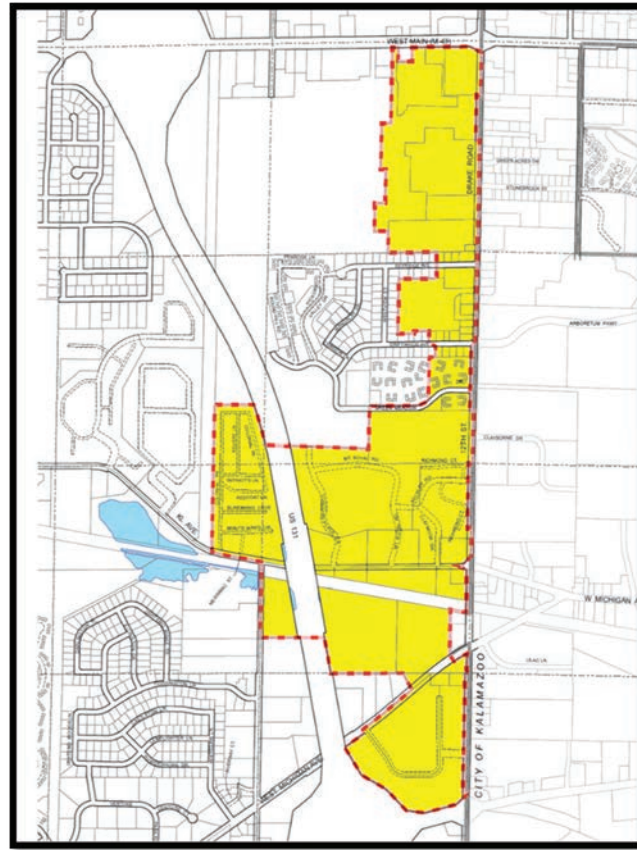
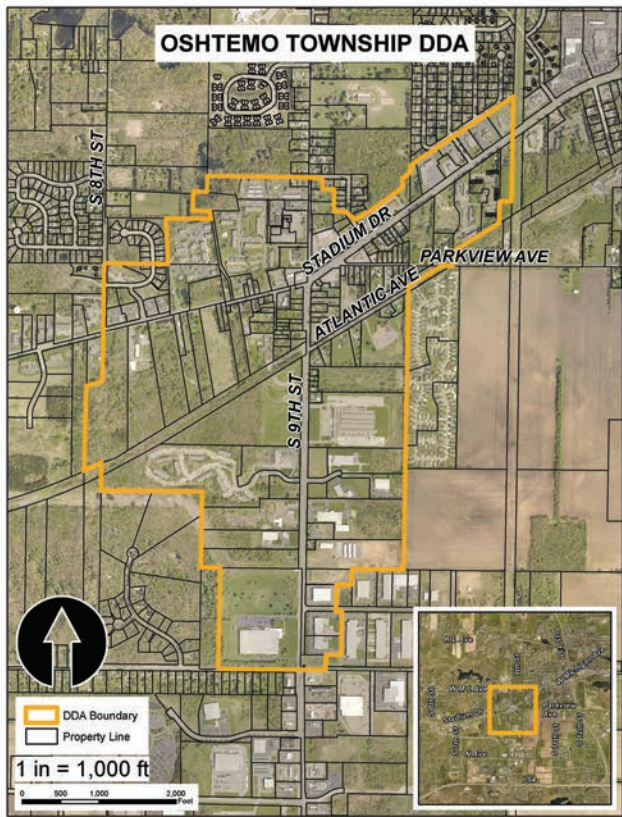
Oshtemo Township has two established tax increment financing districts: the DDA and SoDA. These entities capture and reinvest funds generated in their districts. Two projects sponsored by their correlating group that some may be familiar with are the Drake Road path and the newly installed sidewalk along the north side of Stadium Drive between 8th Street and Quail Run Drive.

For more information about these and other Township boards and committees please visit our website at [oshtemo.org/boards-committees](http://oshtemo.org/boards-committees).

The Township would like to thank these two boards for their hard work and dedication to Oshtemo!

**DDA:** Bill Cekola, Themis Corakis, Rich MacDonald, Dick Skalski, Ryan Winfield, Cheri Bell, Stephen Dallas, Grant Taylor, Libby Heiny-Cogswell

**SoDA:** Corey Ashley, Joe Gesmundo, Cheri Bell, Dennis Patzer, Kelly Bringman, Theresa Spurr, Christine Morse, Dale DeLeeuw, Cheri Jodoin



# Safety News - 2023 Fire Department Highlights

Oshtemo Fire Department is excited to share highlights from 2023 which include adding to our talented group of firefighters, reintroducing community events, and joining a specially trained regional team.

So far this year, we have responded to 3,117 calls, averaging over 9 calls per day, and are on track to surpass last year's call volume by a significant margin. Being able to add two full-time firefighters and four paid, on-call firefighters has helped the department manage the call load as well as add to our knowledge and skillset.

Along with the new skills these firefighters bring, our existing crews have acquired more training. These courses range from very technical subjects, such as trench and structural collapse rescues, to investigation training and building leadership skills. These courses and conferences put the department in the best position to keep our township residents and visitors safe.



## Fire Prevention Day Returns

An open house with live entertainment and a pancake breakfast welcomed over 200 people. Everyone was able to check out Station 1 and the fire trucks.

We are proud to provide Oshtemo with top-notch service and protection and look forward to continued excellence in 2024.

## The Future of Oshtemo

### New Comprehensive Master Plan

Oshtemo Charter Township is gearing up to create a new Master Plan. This is a valuable tool used to set priorities and direction for growth and development in the township.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires that the Master Plan be updated at least every five years. The current plan was first adopted in 2011 with the most recent update in 2019.

Much has changed since then; Oshtemo is now the 85th most populated community in Michigan and the third-largest community in Kalamazoo County.

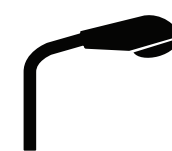
A comprehensive Master Plan is needed to reflect the growth the Township has experienced and guide future expansion while working to preserve a healthy community.

For this project, the Township Board has entered a contract with Progressive AE [progressiveae.com](http://progressiveae.com), an accomplished national architectural, planning, and engineering firm based in Grand Rapids. The Master Plan will direct the Township's future with a strong emphasis on land use, placemaking, transportation, and economic development. The updated plan will honor and build upon the community's earlier planning efforts.

Initial work on the plan has begun and is expected to be completed in 2025.

Community input will be critical to the success of this plan. Please check the Township website at [oshtemo.org](http://oshtemo.org) over the coming months for more information. We look forward to collaborating with residents to protect their values and improve Oshtemo Township!

**Growth Happens. Let's Decide How!**



### Is Your Streetlight Out?

Streetlight issues, including outages or repairs, can be reported directly to Consumers Energy by visiting

[consumersenergy.com/outages/street-light](http://consumersenergy.com/outages/street-light)

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## Important Dates

### Winter Taxes Due - February 14, 2024

Winter taxes are due on February 14, 2024.

### Dog License Purchase Deadline - February 14, 2024

The last day to purchase a county dog license at the township office is February 14, 2024.

### Holiday Office Closures

Oshtemo Charter Township offices will be closed on December 22 and 25, January 1, January 10 from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., January 15, and February 19.

### Oshtemo Charter Township Office Hours

Oshtemo Charter Township offices are closed until 9 a.m. the first Thursday of each month for staff meetings.



7275 W Main Street  
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49009  
oshtemo.org | 269-375-4260

#### Assessor Kristine Biddle

(269) 216-5225 [assessor@oshtemo.org](mailto:assessor@oshtemo.org)

#### Fire Chief Greg McComb

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#### Public Works Dir. Anna Horner

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## New Hire Bios

### 08/23/23: Jackson Couch — Paid, On-call Firefighter

**BIO:** A firefighter trainee and resident of Oshtemo Township, as of late summer 2023. A graduate of Loy Norrix High School and Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Jackson has worked as an EMT/Paramedic since February 2020 in Kalamazoo County and assists the staff at KVCC with EMS education programs. "I am incredibly thankful to be given the opportunity to further my career in Oshtemo and to have the privilege to serve this community."

### 08/23/23: Sawyer Resh — Paid, On-call Firefighter

**BIO:** Originally from Mattawan and a graduate of Mattawan High School this past spring, Sawyer now works at a family business in Oshtemo. Hobbies include dirt bikes and wake surfing. Has three years of experience with the Mattawan Fire Department as cadet captain, earned Fire Fighter 1 & 2 certifications, and is currently working toward the necessary medical license. "I am excited to gain knowledge about the job, myself, and the amazing people I will be working with to help me be the very best. Thank you for the amazing opportunity to get an early start on my career."

### 09/20/23: Malcolm Jones — Paid, On-call Firefighter

**BIO:** Born and raised on the north side of Kalamazoo and a graduate of Kalamazoo Central High School. Malcolm began a career in the fire service in 2018, working for Eastwood Station 8-2 of the Kalamazoo Township Fire Department. Completed Fire Fighter 1 & 2 training programs in 2019, and after two years at KTFD, left to pursue additional experience in Emergency Medical Services. Now a Paramedic and on track to graduate from nursing school in May 2024. "Joining Oshtemo is a privilege, and I am happy to have the opportunity to work with and learn from all of you!"

### 10/10/23: Michael Chapman — Township Trustee

**BIO:** Proud father of two, Henry, 9, and Charlotte, 7, who are both avid enthusiasts of Oshtemo parks and trails. Lieutenant Colonel in the Air National Guard, Flight Surgeon with the 172nd Attack Wing, Board-Certified Emergency Physician, board member of the American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians, has earned two master's degrees, and is working toward a law degree from Northwestern. Originally from Flint, Michael moved to Oshtemo for the military and to work as an ER physician. "It is an honor to serve as your newest Oshtemo Township Trustee. I look forward to representing this diverse community to the best of my ability."