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**OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

**OSHTEMO TOWNSHIP HALL
7275 WEST MAIN STREET**

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2025
6:00 P.M.**

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items
5. Approval of Minutes: November 11, 2025 Meeting
6. Adopt 2026 Meeting Day and Dates: Wednesday or Thursday
7. Other Updates and Business
8. Adjournment

Broadcast Notice:

This meeting is being streamed live on the Public Media Network website and app and recorded for watching on-demand. It is also broadcast on Spectrum and AT&T community access channels.

**Policy for Public Comment
Township Board Regular Meetings, Planning Commission & ZBA Meetings**

All public comment shall be received during one of the following portions of the Agenda of an open meeting:

- a. Citizen Comment on Non-Agenda Items or Public Comment – while this is not intended to be a forum for dialogue and/or debate, if a citizen inquiry can be answered succinctly and briefly, it will be addressed or it may be delegated to the appropriate Township Official or staff member to respond at a later date. More complicated questions can be answered during Township business hours through web contact, phone calls, email (oshtemo@oshtemo.org), walk-in visits, or by appointment.
- b. After an agenda item is presented by staff and/or an applicant, public comment will be invited. At the close of public comment there will be Board discussion prior to call for a motion. While comments that include questions are important, depending on the nature of the question, whether it can be answered without further research, and the relevance to the agenda item at hand, the questions may not be discussed during the Board deliberation which follows.

Anyone wishing to make a comment will be asked to come to the podium to facilitate the audio/visual capabilities of the meeting room. Speakers will be invited to provide their name, but it is not required.

All public comment offered during public hearings shall be directed, and relevant, to the item of business on which the public hearing is being conducted. Comment during the Public Comment Non-Agenda Items may be directed to any issue.

All public comment shall be limited to four (4) minutes in duration unless special permission has been granted in advance by the Supervisor or Chairperson of the meeting.

Public comment shall not be repetitive, slanderous, abusive, threatening, boisterous, or contrary to the orderly conduct of business. The Supervisor or Chairperson of the meeting shall terminate any public comment which does not follow these guidelines.

(adopted 5/9/2000)
(revised 5/14/2013)
(revised 1/8/2018)

Questions and concerns are welcome outside of public meetings during Township Office hours through phone calls, stopping in at the front desk, by email, and by appointment. The customer service counter is open from Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2-5 p.m., and on Friday, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Additionally, questions and concerns are accepted at all hours through the website contact form found at www.oshtemo.org, email, postal service, and voicemail. Staff and elected official contact information is provided below. If you do not have a specific person to contact, please direct your inquiry to oshtemo@oshtemo.org and it will be directed to the appropriate person.

Oshtemo Township Board of Trustees

Supervisor

Cheri Bell 216-5220 cbell@oshtemo.org

Clerk

Dusty Farmer 216-5224 dfarmer@oshtemo.org

Treasurer

Clare Buszka 216-5260 cbuszka@oshtemo.org

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Neil Sikora 760-6769 nsikora@oshtemo.org

Kristin Cole 375-4260 kcole@oshtemo.org

Zak Ford 271-5513 zford@oshtemo.org

Michael Chapman 375-4260 mchapman@oshtemo.org

Township Department Information

Assessor:

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Fire Chief:

Greg McComb 375-0487 gmccomb@oshtemo.org

Ordinance Enforcement:

Alan Miller 216-5230 amiller@oshtemo.org

Parks Director:

Vanessa Street 216-5233 vstreet@oshtemo.org

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Planning Director:

Jodi Stefforia 216-5232 jstefforia@oshtemo.org

Public Works Director:

Anna Horner 216-5228 ahorner@oshtemo.org

**OSHTEMO CHARTER TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 13, 2025**

AGENDA

**PRESENTATION: DRAFT MASTER STREETS PLAN AND DRAFT 2045
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SPECIAL STUDIES**

A meeting of the Oshtemo Charter Township Planning Commission was held Thursday, November 13, 2025, commencing at 6:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Township Hall, 7275 West Main Street.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Chapman, Township Board Liaison
Philip Doorlag, Chair
Deb Everett, Vice Chair
Scot Jefferies
Scott Makohn
Alistair Smith
Jeremiah Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Also present were Jodi Stefforia, Planning Director; James Porter, Township Attorney; Anna Horner Public Works Director; Leeanna Harris, Planning and Zoning Administrator; Colten Hutson, Zoning Administrator; Sharon Lowhim, Township Engineer, Jennifer Wood, Recording Secretary; and approximately 34 interested persons.

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Doorlag called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Those in attendance joined in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Doorlag requested to add Commissioner comment between agenda items 8 and 9.

Mr. Chapman made a **motion** to adopt the agenda as amended. Mr. Makohn **supported the motion**. The **motion passed** unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Doorlag opened the floor for public comment on non-agenda items. Thirteen individuals addressed the Commission. The speakers expressed opposition to the potential for a battery energy storage system project in the Township.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 23, 2025

Chair Doorlag asked for additions, deletions, or corrections to the minutes of the meeting held on October 23, 2025. There were none.

Mr. Chapman made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Meetings of October 23, 2025, as presented. Mr. A. Smith supported the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PRESENTATION: MASTER STREETS PLAN DRAFT AND OSHTEMO 2045 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SPECIAL STUDIES DRAFT

Chair Doorlag introduced Suzanne Schulz from Progressive AE to present on the Master Streets Plan draft and the draft Oshtemo 2045 Comprehensive Plan Special Studies.

Ms. Schulz shared that the draft Master Streets Plan which was presented at the joint Township meeting in September. In addition, Ms. Schulz presented the Special Studies that will be included in the draft Oshtemo 2045 Comprehensive Plan Appendix. Previously the special studies were embedded in the body of the plan but are now included in the Appendix.

Master Streets Plan

Why the Master Streets Plan Is Needed

Oshtemo Township faces unusually high rates of severe and fatal crashes. Between 2020 and 2024, Township roadways saw a disproportionate share of countywide serious injuries on non-highway roads, despite the Township having only about 10% of the county population. Major arterials, such as West Main, Stadium Drive, and 9th Street, are hotspots for injuries, especially for pedestrians and cyclists.

Residents overwhelmingly rely on cars because alternatives are limited, although surveys show nearly half would prefer the ability to walk, and a third would like to bike or scooter if safe infrastructure existed. Transportation costs have also grown significantly; many households spend 35–40% of income on transportation, making mobility a growing economic burden.

Plan Purpose and Approach

The Master Streets Plan's goal is to create a long-term, context-appropriate transportation vision that:

- Improves safety for all users (drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders).
- Coordinates land use and transportation, so growth patterns support a safe, multimodal network.
- Builds a connected street grid, reducing dependence on a few high-speed arterials.
- Supports economic development, especially in areas where redevelopment is likely or already beginning.

- Strengthens the Township's position when coordinating with the Road Commission and MDOT on road design.

The plan is policy-based, and provides detailed data, design standards, and engineering logic to support future decisions and interagency negotiations.

Safety and Crash Analysis

Crash mapping showed:

- The vast majority of severe injuries and fatalities occur on main corridors.
- 75% of crashes involving pedestrians or cyclists result in injury.
- Vulnerable users face the highest risks near apartment clusters and transit corridors.

Exposure analysis demonstrated that more connected local street networks can dramatically reduce crash frequency by distributing traffic rather than concentrating it on a few large roads.

Land Use, Development Patterns, and Induced Demand

A major theme was that road design and land use shape each other. Auto-oriented patterns force everyone onto major arterials, requiring lane expansions that soon fill again (induced demand), worsening safety and congestion.

The presentation emphasized:

- Compact, mixed-use development shortens trip lengths.
- Connected neighborhood streets reduce congestion and improve emergency access.
- Long-term cost burdens are lower when the Township avoids scattered, low-density sprawl that requires miles of new road, water, and sewer infrastructure.

Street Typology and Design Guidance

The plan establishes a comprehensive street typology linked to place types in the Comprehensive Plan. It describes:

- Regional Connectors (e.g., West Main, Stadium Drive): higher speeds, transit access, protected/non-motorized facilities.
- Neighborhood Connectors: moderate volumes, safe for biking/walking, traffic calming expected.
- Neighborhood Streets: low-volume residential streets with pedestrian priority.
- Countryside Roads: rural standards remain appropriate in low-density areas.

Design elements include sidewalks, shared-use paths, landscaping, on-street parking, protected bike lanes where appropriate, access management, and traffic calming tools.

Multimodal Network and Transit Access

Only about 10% of Township homes are within a 10-minute walk of a transit stop. The plan identifies:

- Gaps in sidewalk and path networks.
- Priority corridors for building out a connected non-motorized system.
- Key intersections that require upgraded pedestrian crossings (e.g., hybrid beacons, refuge islands).

- Strategies to align land use with transit-supportive densities.

Implementation Tools

The plan includes:

- A project prioritization matrix (connectivity, safety benefit, feasibility, funding).
- Safety countermeasures endorsed by Federal Highway Administration.
- Access management standards for arterial roads.
- Policy and regulatory tools embedded in the Township's Transportation & Mobility Ordinance.

It also outlines how precise plats and proactive right-of-way planning can help guide future development without forcing premature construction.

Relationship to Road Commission and MDOT

Because Oshtemo does not control its major roads, the plan is essential for:

- Supporting requests for safer designs.
- Making a data-backed case for context-sensitive road improvements.
- Showing statutory support (the Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires evaluating context and all users in street planning and design).
- Attracting grants and leveraging funding partnerships.

Chair Doorlag called for an eight-minute recess.

Chair Doorlag called back to order the Commission meeting at 7:52 p.m.

2045 Comprehensive Plan Special Study Areas

The presentation covered three detailed redevelopment and planning studies, to be included as an Appendix, undertaken alongside the Comprehensive Plan and the Master Streets Plan.

Special Study Area 1: Maple Hill Pavilion / West Main Mall

A conceptual redevelopment shows how the aging mall area could transition into a walkable mixed-use district. Key elements include:

- Breaking up large parking lots with new streets and green spaces.
- Adding approximately 250 housing units and 50,000 square feet of additional commercial space.
- Creating a central green supported by storefronts and public spaces.
- Establishing north–south and east–west shared-use paths that connect to the Drake Farmstead.
- Improving transit access and pedestrian safety along West Main.
- Reusing existing infrastructure and stormwater systems instead of greenfield development.

This is intended as a long-term vision to guide redevelopment when property owners or market conditions allow.

Special Study Area 2: H Avenue to Croydon Corridor

This area is influenced by:

- The upcoming US-131 interchange,
- Existing transit access,
- Challenging soils and slopes,
- Proximity to regional amenities.

The plan identifies:

- Opportunities for compact residential neighborhoods.
- Regional stormwater basin locations.
- A future street network that avoids steep slopes and sensitive areas.
- Strategies for introducing “missing middle” housing (duplexes, townhomes, small multifamily).
- Design guidance for neighborhood character, green spaces, and walkability.
- Environmental protections aligned with Township ordinances (slopes, tree preservation, buffer rules).

Special Study Area 3: Lodge Lane / West Main

This neighborhood has roughly 140 homes but only one point of access—an emergency response concern.

The study analyzes:

- Where future connections can be made as land develops.
- Environmental constraints (slopes, soils, stormwater basins).
- Options for medians and access management on West Main.
- Traffic calming needed to prevent new connections from becoming high-speed shortcuts.
- Potential ordinance adjustments to simplify environmental rules while protecting key natural features.

Overall Takeaways

The Master Streets Plan and the 2045 Comprehensive Plan Special Studies:

- Provide a coordinated, long-term framework for safe, connected streets.
- Integrates transportation planning with the Township’s land-use vision.
- Uses data, crash analysis, and best practices to guide decision-making.
- Supports safer, healthier, and more economically resilient development.
- Strengthens the Township’s ability to work effectively with county and state road agencies.
- Prepares Oshtemo for redevelopment opportunities and future growth while protecting rural and natural areas.

Chair Doorlag asked for Commissioner comments and questions.

Chair Doorlag and Commissioner Everett noted that maps showing future connections caused distress to property owners who think the Township intends to build new roads through farmland or forests.

Ms. Schulz clarified that alignments are conceptual, long-term illustrations, not construction plans. Alignments would shift with parcel splits, ownership changes, and development proposals.

She agreed to add explicit wording stating these are illustrative concepts dependent on future redevelopment.

Chair Doorlag asked whether the transit walkshed map accounted for missing sidewalks.

Schulz confirmed it does not, and clarified that sidewalk and trail gaps are mapped and prioritized separately in the non-motorized scoring system.

Mr. Jefferies raised concerns about neighborhoods wanting to gate themselves even as the Township emphasizes connectivity and how the Township should approach these requests.

Ms. Schulz shared that the Township should generally discourage gated communities, though exceptions may exist when no logical connections are possible. She confirmed that if the Township wants a policy on this, it belongs in the Transportation & Mobility Ordinance.

Ms. Stefforia requested that the Commissioners send her any requested correction of typos and she will work directly with the consultant to adjust these accordingly.

Chair Doorlag asked whether developers were consulted and whether the concept is viable given past pushback on Oshtemo zoning.

Ms. Schulz stated that feasibility still depends on property owners' willingness but noted that redeveloped mixed-use centers typically gain commercial value when housing density is added.

Chair Doorlag questioned whether adopting the Master Streets Plan gives the Township new negotiating ability.

Attorney Porter explained it does not grant additional legal authority, but gives the Township a stronger, rational basis for advocating for safety changes.

Ms. Schulz argued the plan does strengthen the Township's position because it ties design expectations to state planning law and documented public safety issues. Ms. Schulz explained that while statutory authority does not change, the updated plan now more clearly ties local design expectations to state planning requirements, giving the Township stronger technical justification when negotiating for safety and access improvements.

Mr. Jefferies asked whether the required five-year review of the Master Plan should be explicitly stated.

Ms. Schulz agreed this can be added to the implementation recommendations

Chair Doorlag requested explicit language stating the network diagrams are what development should look like if redevelopment occurs, not roads the Township itself intends to build.

Ms. Schulz agreed to add this caveat to the special studies.

CONSIDER FORWARDING 2045 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND MASTER STREETS PLAN TO TOWNSHIP BOARD TO COMMENCE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Chair Doorlag asked the Commission whether they felt ready to recommend forwarding the 2045 Comprehensive Plan and the Master Plan to the Township Board for review and public comment, or if they preferred additional discussion. Chair Doorlag took a quick straw poll to gauge comfort with proceeding with all members indicating readiness to proceed.

Ms. Everett **made a motion** to forward the 2045 Comprehensive Plan including the Special Studies and Master Streets Plan to the Township Board to commence the public comment period. Mr. Makohn **supported the motion**.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Stefforia clarified that the Township Board needs to give formal approval to commence the public comment period.

Chair Doorlag noted that Township Board approval would begin a 63-day window after which revisions can be made based on public input. Ms. Stefforia added that changes can be made up to and through the public hearing, and that after the Planning Commission adopts the plans by resolution, the Township Board must still adopt them as well. Chair Doorlag confirmed this.

The **motion passed** unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Doorlag opened the floor for public comment. Seven people came forward and one letter was read into the record. Several addressed the Commission with concerns and questions regarding the comprehensive plan and master streets plan, but the majority spoke in opposition to the potential for a battery energy storage system in the Township.

COMMENTS FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. Chapmen acknowledged that the discussion covered difficult topics the community did not ask for and emphasized the need for a collaborative approach involving citizens, public safety staff, Township Board members, and the Planning Commission. He stressed the importance of bringing in neutral subject-matter experts, on public health, chemical risks, and ordinance development.. The goal is to craft the strongest, most protective ordinance possible, within legal constraints. Mr. Chapman noted that everyone is in a challenging position, but working together and taking the time to do it correctly will produce the best outcome. He thanked the public for attending, staying engaged, and helping the Commission make better decisions.

Ms. Everett expressed her agreement with Mr. Chapman's remarks.

Chair Doorlag expressed agreement with Mr. Chapman's comments before continuing. He acknowledged the public's concerns and apologized for the formality of the process, explaining that state law requires a specific procedure for drafting and adopting ordinances. Chair Doorlag emphasized that neither the Planning Commission nor the Township can simply create an ordinance without public input, drafts must go through public hearings and comment opportunities before adoption.

Mr. Porter added that an initial draft ordinance does exist as a public document, but revisions are not considered public until formally brought to the Commission. Mr. Porter explained that the process may include an ad hoc committee and that the Township Board intends to seek expert analysis to ensure any ordinance provides strong community protection.

Both noted the challenges of creating a "workable ordinance". Both acknowledged that many residents expressed strong opposition to the battery energy storage system. Chair Doorlag concluded by outlining that these are the tasks ahead and that the next steps will be communicated at future meetings. He thanked the public for attending and providing input, stressing that community feedback is essential for informed decision-making.

OTHER UPDATES AND BUSINESS

The Planning Commission discussed whether to shift its 2026 meeting dates to Wednesdays or keep them on Thursdays, primarily to address a scheduling conflict for Chair Doorlag. The Commissioners shared their availability, most preferred Thursdays, though some were flexible or favored Wednesdays.

Mr. A. Smith **made a motion** to maintain Thursday meeting dates. Mr. Chapman **seconded the motion**.

During discussion, timing concerns arose regarding how soon meeting dates must be finalized and whether a decision could wait until the December meeting.

Commissioner A. Smith withdrew his motion.

The 2026 meeting date decision will be placed on the next agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Minutes Prepared: November 17, 2025

Minutes Approved: