

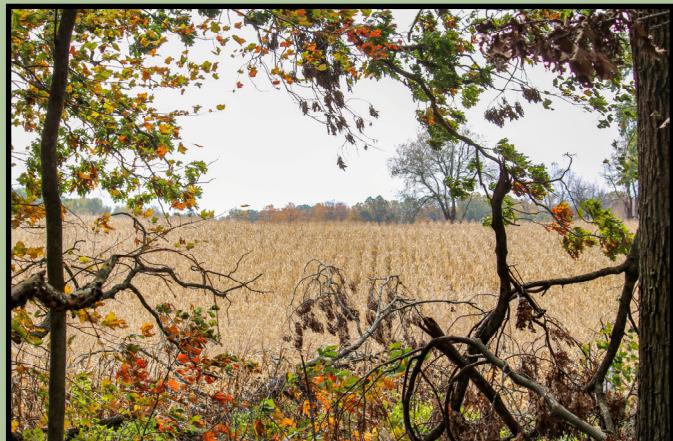
# OSHTEMO

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

## CHARTER ANNUAL REPORT

### 2025

# TOWNSHIP



## LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Section 308 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended) requires the Planning Commission to prepare an annual report for the Township Board documenting the administration of the Zoning Ordinance. It is also a requirement to outline possible future amendments to the Ordinance. This report fulfills this obligation for 2025 and provides updates on the activities and projects planned for 2026.

The Planning Department has expanded the scope of the report to further document the activities of the Zoning Board of Appeals and the administrative activities of Planning Department staff. By doing so, the document provides a more complete picture of the Planning and Zoning activities in the Township. This report is submitted to the Township Board for review and consideration as it develops its own work plans and budgets for the coming years.

# PLANNING COMMISSION

## MEETINGS

The Planning Commission had a total of 20 regular meetings, and two joint meetings. Of the 20 planned regular meetings, 13 meetings were held and seven were cancelled due to lack of agenda items ready for review. November and December each had only one meeting scheduled due to the holidays.

## 2025 ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

**Ordinance No. 673** *Amendment to Articles 2, 26, 27, 28, 48, and 49.* These Ordinance Amendments related to a request for a text amendment to allow warehouse and distribution centers in the I-R district initiated by an applicant. The work on this ordinance began in 2024, and wrapped up in 2025.

**Ordinance No. 674** *Amendment to Articles 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 18, 19, 20, 21, 27, 28, 30, 35, 48, 55, 57, and 64.* These Ordinance Amendments related to an audit of the Township's childcare readiness showing how the Township could be more friendly to childcare uses and lessen the burden on residents and homeowners in obtaining local approval to establish or expand the use. Other amendments were the result of areas that were identified for modernizing and clarity.

**Ordinance No. 679** *Amendment to Article 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 19, 48, 57, and 64.* These Ordinance Amendments provided language for accessory dwelling units, and clarified accessory building and site plan review language. The language was crafted to ensure that the accessory dwelling units are compatible and harmonious with where they will be constructed.

**Ordinance No. 680** *Amendment to Articles 48 and 52.* These Ordinance Amendments related to a long overdue look at the Off-Street Parking Ordinance with the goal of reducing the amount of pavement in new developments and in retrofitting of existing sites. These amendments updated and overhauled parking and site circulation requirements.

**Ordinance No. 681** *Amendment to Articles 19, 20, 21, 35, 41, 42, 43, 44, 49, 51, and 64.* After day-to-day implementation of the *Transportation and Mobility Ordinance*, these Ordinance Amendments related to several instances where information was duplicated amongst existing Zoning Ordinance Sections. These sections were analyzed to ensure consistency between the Zoning Ordinance and the Transportation and Mobility Ordinance.

**Ordinance No. 684** *Amendment to Articles 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 18, 19, 20, 21, 26, 27, 28, 30, 41, 48, 49, and 57.* As a result of the first application of the Mixed Use District, these Ordinance Amendments included changes to the Planned Unit Development ordinance regarding phasing timelines. Other amendments were those relating to adult foster care facilities, temporary outdoor events, and non-motorized facilities.

**Ordinance No. 685** *Amendment to Articles 50 and 52.* These Ordinance Amendments related to changes to the supplemental setback requirement when certain uses abut each other that do not have negative externalities or warrant a greater setback. An unrelated change was to clarify off-street parking and storage of vehicles, boats, etc. in the residential districts.

## UPCOMING ORDINANCE AND MASTER PLAN AMENDMENTS

One of the purposes of the Annual Report is to look ahead and anticipate those items that the Planning Commission desires to address or work on over the next 12 months and beyond in the area of planning and zoning. *Upcoming Ordinance Amendments* topics also on the Planning Commission's project list such as housing and lot size requirements (with a Housing Readiness Incentive Grant); permitted uses/permited uses with conditions and special uses in various districts; lighting; environmental protection requirements; and the continued implementation of the Go! Green Oshtemo and the Housing Plan and early steps toward implementing the 2025 Comprehensive Master Plan.

## ORDINANCE STUDIES CONTINUING INTO 2026

*Large Scale Solar, Wind, and Energy Systems* — Public Act 233 of 2023 went into effect on November 29, 2024 and limits local zoning of large-scale solar, wind, and energy storage systems. The Act grants the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) a new authority to issue certificates for renewable projects at designated thresholds. It gives developers an option to go to the MPSC for a certificate for the use, rather than go through the local zoning approval process; the uses are allowed without regard to underlying zoning. While the Township adopted a solar energy systems language in 2024, battery energy storage systems or wind energy were left unaddressed. Work on this began following the adoption of the Act, and continues into 2026.

## MASTER PLANNING EFFORTS

*Comprehensive Master Plan* — In partnership with Progressive AE, the Township kicked off the comprehensive master plan process. The 2025 Comprehensive Master Plan will include a Place Types Map (like a Future Land Use Map), a long range transportation plan, an updated Non-Motorized Facilities Plan, a Master Streets Plan, the evaluation of existing master plan documents, and the incorporation of desired planning concepts. Special studies were also conducted for certain areas of the Township, including near West Main Street, Maple Hill Drive and the Maple Hill Pavilion Mall, H Avenue to Croyden Avenue, and Lodge Lane to West Main Street. This multi-year project and work is expected to wrap up in early 2026.

## SPECIAL EXCEPTION USES

Five Special Exception Use applications were reviewed in 2025. All but one were approved. A table summarizing the Special Exception Use reviews in 2025 can be found below.

Special Exception Use Reviews in 2025:				5
Project Title / Address (Parcel #)	Applicant	Use/Project Summary	Decision	Date
Rabbit Angels Rescue / 3531 N 3rd Street (05-05-380-021)	Suzanne Bennett, Rabbit Angels Rescue	To establish a kennel for rabbits in approximately 900 square feet of an existing 1,800 square foot barn.	Approval	02/27
Eighth Street Veterinary Care, LLC / 624 S 8th Street (05-22-285-030)	Thomas Carpenter, AR Engineering	To construct a 1,193 square foot addition to their existing 1,900 square foot veterinary care hospital.	Approval	02/27
Talsma Furniture / 6139 & 6169 W Main Street (05-14-430-040 & -050)	Tim Talsma, Talsma Furniture	To construct a 49,358 square foot single-story building to serve as a furniture store.	Approval	05/08
Nelson Home Occupation / 2100 S 4th Street (05-29-280-016)	Bill and Jaymie Nelson	To establish a golf and softball operation as a home occupation within two existing accessory buildings.	Denial	05/22—06/12
Little Pistol Farms / 2335 S Van Kal Street (05-30-155-029)	Kenneth and Katherine Schneider	To establish an Agritourism, Category 2 use.	Approval	08/28

Prior to the adoption of Ordinance No. 684, the Planning Commission permitted staff to administratively review temporary outdoor events once they have been approved through the public hearing process or if they last only one day. Zero new special use events were approved in 2025 and eight events were approved administratively. A summary of the administratively approved temporary outdoor events can be found on page 9 of this report. Following the adoption of Ordinance No. 684, staff are authorized to administratively approve temporary outdoor events that last up to three days.

## REZONINGS

The Planning Commission received one request for rezoning in 2025. A conceptual review of a 48-acre mixed use development in the 6400 block of W Main Street went before the Planning Commission at their regular April 10th meeting, and was tabled to their regular April 24th meeting. The project had a conceptual review at their regular September 12th, 2024, meeting. Conceptual review is a mandatory step in the Mixed Use Rezoning process.

## PRELIMINARY/CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN REVIEW

No preliminary/conceptual review applications were reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2025, besides as noted above.

# ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

## MEETINGS / ATTENDANCE

Zoning Board of Appeals meetings are generally scheduled on the fourth Tuesday of each month. In 2025, of the twelve regularly scheduled meetings, eight were held and four were canceled due to lack of agenda items. In addition, the Zoning Board of Appeals was invited to two Joint Board meetings.

## SITE PLAN REVIEW

Three site plan reviews went before the Zoning Board of Appeals in 2025. The requests are summarized below.

Site Plan Reviews in 2025:				3
Project Title / Address (Parcel)	Applicant	Use/Project Summary	Decision	Date
Kevin Laaksonen / 7190 W KL Avenue (05-22-285-047)	Seth Baar, Bosch Architecture	To construct a 4,300 square foot warehouse building.	Approval	03/25
Story Point Cottages / 1451 & 1700 Bronson Way (05-12-455-	Kevin Denooyer, CommonSail Development	To construct a 23-unit, three and four family dwelling, senior cottage development.	Approval	03/25
Blackberry Systems / 6477 W KL Avenue (05-23-405-013)	Cameron Shields, Blackberry Systems	A project split into three phases, to construct a new 2,100 square foot single-story warehouse, and office and showroom additions.	Approval	04/22

## VARIANCES

The Zoning Board of Appeals reviewed thirteen dimensional variance requests in 2025. A variance is a license to use property in a way not permitted under the Ordinance. If the Township regularly receives variance applications on a specific requirement, it could mean there is something out-of-step with that Ordinance, necessitating a review that may warrant an Ordinance amendment.

Variances in 2025:				13
Title / Address (Parcel #)	Applicant	Request Summary	Decision	Date
Fountain Springs / 1410 S 9th Street (05-23-355-011)	Craig Schellbach, Yes Fountain Springs, LLC	To not be required to construct the non-motorized facility adjacent to S 8th Street and S 9th Street, per Section 57.90 of the Zoning Ordinance.	Approval, Approval	02/25
Blackberry Systems Inc. / 6477 W KL Avenue (05-23-405-013)	Cameron Shields, Blackberry Systems Inc.	To not be required to construct the non-motorized facility and certain landscaping along S 9th Street, per Section 57.90 and 53.60 of the Zoning Ordinance, respectively.	Approval, Approval	04/22
Maple Hill Leaseholds, LLC / 5622 W Main Street (05-13-180-035)	Jason Headley, RWL Signs	To establish a total of 205 square feet of wall sign area, where only 196 feet is allowed and to allow seven wall signs, while only four are allowed, per Section 55.80 of the Zoning Ordinance.	Approval, Approval	05/27

***VARIANCES, continued***

<b>Variances in 2025, continued:</b>				<b>13</b>
<b>Title / Address (Parcel #)</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Request Summary</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Date</b>
Neal and Amy Miedema, 5991 Venture Park Drive (05-25-153-160)	Andrew Rossell, AR Engineering	To allow for a reduced setback of 59 feet where 85 feet are required, and to not be required to construct the non-motorized facility along Venture Park Drive, per Section 50.70 and Section 57.90 of the Zoning Ordinance, respectively.	Denial, Approval	06/24
James St. James, 6660 Rose Arbour Avenue (05-11-135-100)	James St. James	To allow a reduced setback of 30 feet where 70 feet are required, per Section 50.60 of the Zoning Ordinance.	Approval	06/24
LaVerne and Deborah Caron, 2550 Cutty Sark Drive (05-11-225-380)	LaVerne Caron	To allow for a reduced setback of 24 feet, 7 inches, while 30 feet are required, per Section 50.60 of the Zoning Ordinance.	Approval	08/26
Presley Penola S Living Trust, 5418 W G Avenue (05-01-230-030)	Fenner Brown, 5442 W G Avenue	To allow for a redescription of an unplattd parcel that does not satisfy the 1.5 acre requirement in Section 50.10 of the Zoning Ordinance.	Approval	09/23
Eric and Maria Weathers, 3841 & 3815 N 3rd Street (05-05-330-060 & -077)	Eric Weathers	To allow for a redescription of two properties resulting in a parcel that does not satisfy the minimum frontage requirements in Section 50.10 of the Zoning Ordinance.	Approval	10/28
Scott and Mary Husted, 9600 Block of W L Avenue (05-29-130-020)	Scott Husted	To allow for a parcel that does not satisfy the minimum frontage requirements of 200 feet in Section 50.10 of the Zoning Ordinance to become buildable.	Approval	10/28

# PLANNING DEPARTMENT REVIEWS

The Planning Department processed over 600 development applications last year, including rezoning requests, variances, site plans, and building, sign, and sidewalk permits. The Zoning Ordinance also grants the authority to the Planning Department to administratively review and approve site plans in certain instances. These include minor amendments to a previously approved site plan, accessory buildings that meet certain criteria, certain temporary outdoor events, and communication tower co-locations or upgrades. Staff also provide support to the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and the South Drake Road Corridor Improvement Authority (SoDA).

A brief summary of the 2025 staff level reviews are on the following page; these reviews account for a significant portion of the Zoning Administrators' daily activities.

## **BUILDING PERMITS**

Planning Department staff reviews building permit applications that are subject to zoning compliance as determined by the Oshtemo Building Department to ensure that all requirements of the Zoning Ordinance are met. Staff also checks for any conditions of approval that may have been placed on the property by the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, or Township Board during the plan review and approval process. In 2025, the Township issued over 650 building permits. Of the total number of building permits issued, about half required zoning review and approval by the Township Zoning Administrators.

## **SIGN PERMITS**

A total of 34 sign permits were issued in 2025. New signs were over half of the sign permits issued in 2025, at 24 permits. The remaining ten permits were for temporary signs or special event signs. The majority of the total sign permits were issued to addresses on West Main Street, with the remaining sign permits primarily on Stadium Drive and the Drake Road and 9th Street corridors.

## **LAND DIVISIONS, COMBINATIONS, REDESCRIPTIONS**

In 2025, the Zoning Administrators worked with the Assessing Department to review 15 land division, re-description, or combination applications. The task of the Zoning Administrator is to ensure that the requested change to property boundaries meets the requirements established in the Township's Zoning Ordinance and that other non-Township agencies have signed off, as applicable.

## **SIDEWALK PERMITS**

In 2015, the Township initiated a sidewalk permitting process to help ensure new sidewalk development meets regulatory standards. These requirements incorporate the Americans with Disabilities Act standards for accessible design. The permit requires both a pre- and post-pour inspection, which is managed by the Public Works Department. In 2025, a total of 17 sidewalk permits were issued. The number of sidewalk permits issued can be indicative of the residential construction occurring in the Township.

## **ADDRESSING**

In March of 2021, the Township adopted a new Street Name and Addressing Workflow with the Kalamazoo County Planning Department in which the coordination of street address assignment became the responsibility of the Planning Department. This created a uniform address and street data procedure for more consistent assignment and for improved emergency response within the limits of Oshtemo Township (and all of Kalamazoo County). In 2025, eight address requests were processed. Of the eight, one was for a residential development. The residential development included addresses for a 23-unit senior housing development.

## **ZONING VERIFICATION LETTERS**

A Zoning Verification Letter is a document provided to an individual by the Township that verifies the current zoning of a particular piece of property, the types of uses that are allowed in that zoning district, past approvals, and other requested zoning information or documents. In 2025, nine applications for Zoning Verification letters were reviewed and letters were issued.

## **DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY & SOUTH DRAKE ROAD CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY**

The Planning Department provides Staff support to both the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and the South Drake Road Corridor Improvement Authority (SoDA) performing the duties of the Secretary and the Treasurer. The DDA meets bi-monthly and had five meetings in 2025. Of the four regular scheduled meetings in 2025, SoDA met three times, and one meeting was canceled due to lack of quorum. A separate Annual Synopsis has been prepared for DDA and for SoDA pursuant to statutory requirements.

## ADMINISTRATIVE SITE PLAN REVIEWS

Total Administrative Site Plans Reviews in 2025:			14
Address	Applicant	Use/Project Summary	
6110 Technology Avenue	Derek Wissner	Temporary equipment storage yard	
5050 W Main Street	Amy Gilpen, Consumers Energy	Temporary equipment storage yard	
W Main Street	Kevin Kline	Select cut permit	
2335 S Van Kal Street	Katherine Schneider	Agritourism, Category 1	
690 Dragonfly Road	Hayden Olszyk	Site modifications; lighting upgrades and crash gate	
3330 S 4th Street	Thomas Graham	Clear cut permit	
7171 Stadium Drive	Peter Sarelis	Parking lot expansion	
5350 W Main Street	Vito Cincinelli	Temporary equipment storage yard	
N 10th Street	Jeff Scheffers	Pre-application site plan review	
151 S Van Kal Street	Colleen McInnis	Accessory dwelling unit	
1955 S 8th Street	Lori LaBelle	Accessory dwelling unit	
3011 Bramble Drive	Andrew Henn	Portable storage container	
5350 W Main Street	Flora Mazreku, FSP Architects	Parking lot improvements	
7275 W Main Street	Zach Pearson	Site plan review	

## TEMPORARY OUTDOOR EVENTS

Total Administrative Temporary Outdoor Events Reviews in 2025:			8
Address	Applicant	Event	Approval Date
8178 W Main Street	D&R Sports Center	Boat and Sports show with a food vendor from April 18, 2025, through April 19, 2025.	03/31
8456 Stadium Drive	Lawton Ridge Winery	Food trucks on Wednesday evenings from April 16th, 2025, through October 29, 2025.	03/19
5034 W KL Avenue	The Good Stuff Fireworks	Sale of fireworks from the site's parking lot from June 10, 2025, through July 8, 2025.	06/03
6660 W Main Street	TNT Fireworks	Sale of fireworks from the site's parking lot from June 22, 2025, through July 8, 2025.	06/09
6800 W Main Street	Country Fresh Farms	Meat sales, taking place from the site's parking lot from September 17, 2025, through September 19, 2025.	09/15
1030 S 8th Street	Meadow Run Knoll LLC	Food trucks, three days a week, from April 18, 2025, through October 31, 2025.	03/14
6779 W Main Street	Jake's Fireworks	Sale of fireworks from the site's parking lot from June 19, 2025, through July 6, 2025.	05/22
5030 W Main Street	Oshtemo Rotary Club	Oshtemo Rotary Family Festival, taking place from April 24, 2025, through April 28, 2025.	03/27

## ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATION TOWER REVIEWS

No approval letters were issued for administrative cell tower reviews. One cell tower upgrade was reviewed through the building permit process. This upgrade took place at 624 N 4th Street.