
Oshtemo Township Zoning Ordinance Update Frequently Asked Questions June 2026

Oshtemo Township began updating its zoning ordinance in May 2026 with a Planning Commission workshop. The session included a presentation on zoning reform from the Michigan Association of Planning, followed by a discussion with Planning Commissioners led by Progressive Companies, the firm selected to lead the project.

With the recent adoption of the 2045 Oshtemo Comprehensive Plan, updating the zoning ordinance is the township's most immediate and impactful action implement the plan's goals. This FAQ provides brief answers to common questions about the zoning ordinance update. This document will be updated periodically throughout the process. For more information about the zoning ordinance update, please contact Jodi Stefforia at jstefforia@oshtemo.org or 269-216-5232.

Why is Oshtemo Township updating its zoning ordinance?

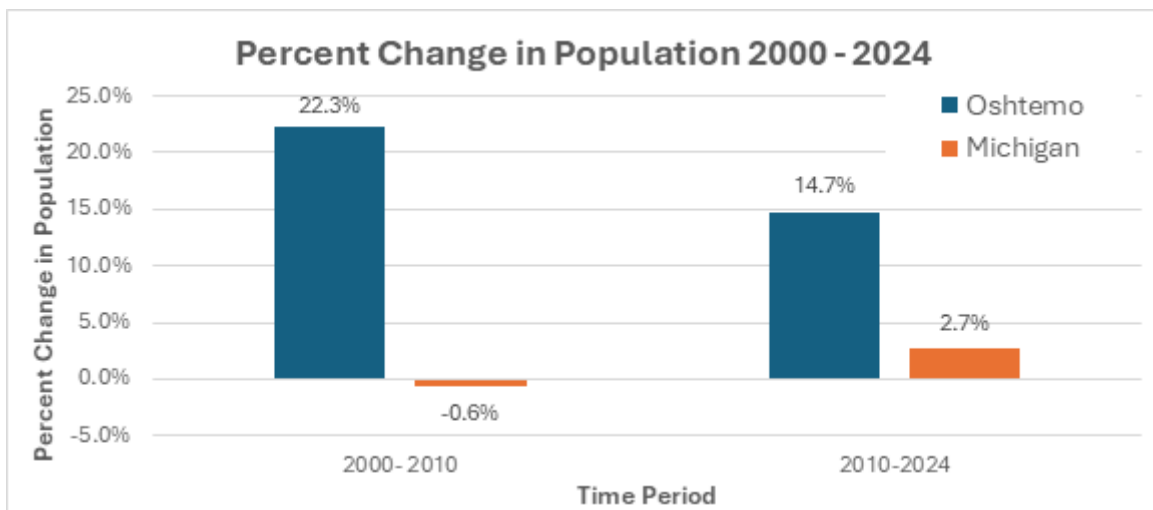
Updating the zoning ordinance was identified as a priority while creating the 2045 Oshtemo Comprehensive Plan. The Plan identifies a variety of updates to the ordinance that are necessary to support preservation of rural and natural areas of the township, create great places, and improve transportation choices, while also allowing for additional housing options in existing neighborhoods. Oshtemo Township received a Housing Readiness grant from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) to support the cost of the update.

What is the relationship between the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance update?

The Comprehensive Plan, along with the place type framework and zoning plan, provides a 20-year vision for land use and development in Oshtemo. While the plan makes many zoning-related recommendations, the zoning ordinance update will not implement all those changes at once. Instead, the Township through the Planning Commission will identify the highest-priority zoning changes needed to implement the comprehensive plan, while also updating the ordinance to make it more consistent and easier to use.

Providing more options for housing is a priority of this zoning ordinance update. It seems like a lot of housing is currently being built in Oshtemo Township. Why do we need more?

Several new housing projects are working their way through the permitting process. Plans for approximately 840 new housing units either have been reviewed and approved or are being considered for a future application by various developers, but that housing is many months to years away from being built. The Comprehensive Plan process identified a strong demand for smaller-scale, incremental housing choices within existing neighborhoods to supplement the large development projects. These “missing middle” housing options provide an option for retirement-age and young people looking for something other than a large single-family home or an apartment. Focusing new housing in existing neighborhoods also utilizes existing infrastructure (roads, sewer, water), rather than requiring costly extensions into new developments that the community will have to maintain in the future.



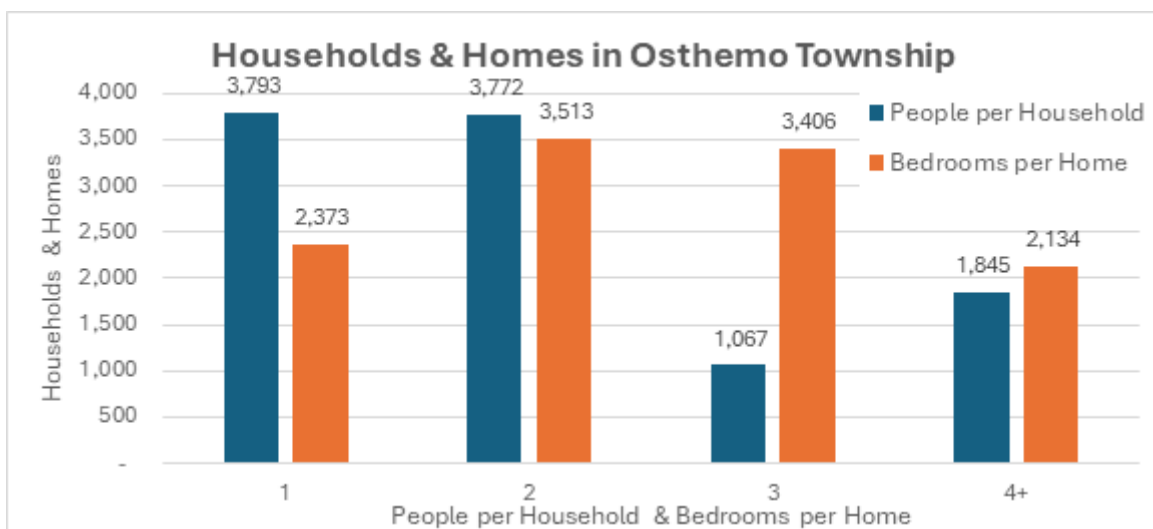
One of the major factors behind the need for more housing in Oshtemo, and throughout Michigan, is changing demographics. While the State of Michigan has seen very small population growth, Oshtemo Township has seen significant growth. Between 2000 and 2024, the Township gained 6,847 new residents, growing from 17,005 residents in 2000 to 23,852 residents in 2024, an increase of 28.7 percent. Comparatively, Michigan grew by just 2.0 percent over the same time period. Between 2000 and 2010, Oshtemo’s population grew by 22.3 percent and between 2010 and 2024 the population grew by 14.7 percent. Since 2000, Oshtemo’s population growth has been nearly 10 times that of Michigan as a whole!

Source: US Census Bureau Decennial Census (2000 & 2010) & American Community Survey (2024)

Along with overall population growth in Oshtemo Township, changing household dynamics are driving demand for different types of housing. Smaller households are now the norm: according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 72% of Oshtemo households have only one or two people. However, just 52% of Oshtemo's homes have one or two bedrooms. In other words, much of the current housing stock does not match the needs of existing residents.

This mismatch is likely to grow as national and statewide trends continue toward smaller families and households. As illustrated in the chart below, Oshtemo has 3,793 one-person households but only 2,373 one-bedroom homes. In contrast, there are 1,067 three-person households and 3,406 three-bedroom homes.

Many of these smaller households are retirees who want to downsize but remain in the community, while others are young households in apartments who are looking for attainable "starter home" options.



Household & Housing Unit Size Comparison (Source: 2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)

Will the zoning ordinance impact local control over zoning decisions?

No, this update is not intended to reduce local control over decision-making in any way. During the May 14 Michigan Association of Planning presentation, one topic was to support housing development by reducing the number of projects that require approval of the Township Board, and to explore options for allowing administrative or staff approval of routine projects that clearly meet ordinance standards. These options will be reviewed with the Planning Commission and Township Board over

the coming months, and any changes to the local development review process will be decided by the Township Board.

Separately, there is a package of bills pending in the Michigan Legislature that would preempt township control over certain aspects of housing-related zoning. This legislation is entirely separate from Oshtemo Township's zoning ordinance update.

What is the timeline for the Zoning Ordinance Update?

Updating the zoning ordinance was identified as a priority while creating the 2045 Oshtemo Comprehensive Plan. The Plan identifies a variety of updates to the ordinance that are necessary to support preservation of rural and natural areas of the township, create great places, and improve transportation choices, while also allowing for additional housing options in existing neighborhoods. Oshtemo Township received a Housing Readiness grant from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) to support the cost of the update.

How does this update relate to the potential Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Zoning Ordinance Amendments?

Any future amendments to address utility scale energy systems will be part of a separate effort. Energy System regulations, including BESS, are not a part of this ordinance update.