

Parks Department

Guided Nature Walks A new program this summer!

Using Your Senses Walk

Flesher Field – Saturday, July 19, at 10 a.m.

Who doesn't love the sights, sounds, and scents of the great outdoors? Join us for a leisurely stroll through one of Oshtemo's beautiful parks as we explore nature with our senses. Discover new ways to see, hear, smell, and feel the world around you, one peaceful step at a time.

Footpath Through the Prairie

Drake Farmstead Park – Saturday, Aug. 16, at 10 a.m.

Did you know that hundreds of years ago, southwest Michigan sat on the edge of the Great Plains? Take a walk through the tallgrass prairie at the historic Drake Farmstead and discover how native plants adapted to thrive in this unique landscape. Learn how these resilient species attracted Indigenous peoples and early settlers, and how they continue to shape our environment today.

Each session begins at the park pavilion and includes:

- 3/4 mile of gentle trails.
- Hands-on activities along the way.
- A small take-home item.

StoryWalk Is Pure Family Fun!

The StoryWalk® at Oshtemo Township Park is here to stay, and tells a new story every other month! After your stroll, swing by the Oshtemo KPL branch to pick up a fun take-home item. Big thanks to Oshtemo Friends of the Parks and KPL Oshtemo for making this community favorite happen!

The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. StoryWalk® is

a registered service mark owned by Ms. Ferguson. A StoryWalk® provides shared literacy and movement opportunities for the community by displaying the pages of picture books across multiple sign panels.



Residential Building Permits

Protect Your Home and Investment

Your home is one of your most valuable investments, and proper maintenance is key to protecting it. The Oshtemo Township Building Department enforces Michigan Construction Codes to ensure safety, quality, and legal compliance with all building projects.

Permits and inspections are required for work such as building additions, finishing basements, installing decks, or replacing furnaces and water heaters. These safeguards protect your property value and prevent costly problems, especially when selling your home.

If you're hiring a contractor, keep these tips in mind:

- Avoid high-pressure sales or "limited time" offers, and take time to plan.
- Get multiple quotes to compare prices and project scopes.
- Verify the contractor's Michigan license and insurance. Beware if they ask you to pull permits yourself.
- Get a detailed written contract outlining scope, timeline, costs, payment schedule, and contact info. Don't start work without signed agreements and permits.
- Check references to confirm reputation.
- Don't pay in full upfront; pay the balance after project completion and inspections.
- Confirm all required permits and inspections are completed, including the final inspection.

For questions, contact the Oshtemo Building Department at (269) 585-4150 or building@oshtemo.org

Infrastructure News

Neighborhood Traffic Calming in Oshtemo



Oshtemo is proud to be the first township to complete the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County's Neighborhood Traffic Calming initiative, based on data from local speed studies and thanks to resident input.

This summer, one neighborhood will see the installation of speed humps, speed tables, and traffic circles to help reduce speeds and discourage cut through traffic.

These improvements are designed to make our streets safer for everyone. If you're concerned about speeding in your neighborhood, reach out to Public Works to learn if this program could help your area, too!

Construction & Sewer Project Updates

Oshtemo has officially signed the first round of bonds to kick off the Neighborhood Sanitary Sewer Expansion projects! Construction will begin in the Skyridge/Driftwood area in early summer, with the Fairlane Plat project following in the second half of the season. These projects include both new public sewer service and fully reconstructed roads.

Want to stay in the loop? Visit our dedicated Sewer Updates page. Phase 1 updates are now live, and a page for Phase 2—expected to go out for bids this fall—will be available soon. Scroll below for details on future neighborhood plans!

oshtemo.org/departments/public-works-department

Why So Much Road Construction?

We hear this question a lot: "Why didn't you plan better so these projects didn't overlap?"

The truth is that many road projects are scheduled based on when funding becomes available and when permits or clearances are approved by other public agencies or private entities.

Rest assured, professional engineers and planners work years in advance to coordinate projects. Even when construction overlaps, routes and activities are carefully managed to minimize disruption. While we know the impacts can be inconvenient, coordination with emergency services and public users remains a top priority.

Thank you for your patience as we work to improve our roads!

At Your Service From Supervisor Cheri Bell



How We Build the Budget

It’s budgeting season here in Oshtemo, and that means lots of careful thought, planning, and prioritizing as we prepare for the year ahead. One of the most important questions we ask is: What can we afford—and what should we prioritize to best serve the community?

The budget process kicks off in June and July, when each Township department presents their **Accomplishments, Goals, and Visions (AGVs)** at public meetings. These presentations are an important part of transparent government, allowing staff to reflect on recent progress, share departmental goals for the upcoming year, and offer longer-term ideas for the future.

After AGVs are shared, these goals, which come with estimated costs, are used to build the operating budget for the next year.

Meanwhile, the visions, which may require more extensive planning and funding, are incorporated into our Capital Improvement Plan to guide multi-year investment.

In October, a complete draft budget is presented to the Township Board for review and public discussion. After any necessary adjustments, the final budget is adopted in December, setting the plan for the following calendar year.

It’s a thoughtful, collaborative process that balances ambition with fiscal responsibility. Every step is shaped by public input, data, and a focus on what matters most to Oshtemo residents, whether it’s improving infrastructure, supporting public safety, enhancing parks, or ensuring efficient services.

Thank you for your continued interest and commitment. We encourage you to attend budget-related meetings or reach out with questions, we’re always happy to walk you through how your tax dollars are being invested back into your community.

Yard Waste Program Expanded



Residents still clearing debris from last month’s storms can take advantage of our free yard waste disposal vouchers. Due to increased need, an additional voucher has been made available to all households. Each voucher includes up to 4 yards of disposal at no cost.

The Yard Waste Disposal Program is a service provided by Oshtemo Charter Township for residents to dispose of yard waste such as grass clippings, brush, and leaves. The program runs from March 1 through November 30 each year. This program is in addition to the bulk trash disposal program.

Visit our website to request your voucher and get more info:
oshtemo.org/yard-waste

A Summer Update From Fire Chief Greg McComb

Community Connect: Help Us Help You!

We’re excited to offer *Community Connect*, a secure and easy-to-use platform that allows you to share critical information about your household with our first responders. Whether it’s details about medical needs, mobility challenges, pets, or family members in the home, this information helps us respond more effectively and safely during an emergency. You can also use the platform to request your burning permit. Signing up takes just a few minutes but can make a big difference when seconds count.

Learn more:
communityconnect.io/info/mi-oshtemo

New Fire Engine Arriving Soon!

We’re proud to announce that a brand-new fire engine is scheduled to arrive by July 1. This new apparatus replaces an older engine that has reached the end of its reliable service life. With updated features and enhanced capabilities, the new engine will support our ongoing commitment to providing efficient, safe, and high-quality emergency response to our community.

Take a look: fireacellc.com/15705.html



ISO Inspection Completed

On June 4, our department completed its Insurance Services Office (ISO) inspection, which evaluates our staffing, equipment, water supply, communications, and fire prevention efforts. We’re optimistic about the results, which influence property insurance rates for our residents and businesses.

Thank You

We appreciate your continued support. It’s an honor to serve you. If you have questions or just want to say hello, we’d love to hear from you.

Stay safe and enjoy your summer!

oshtemo.org/departments/fire-department

Featured Events in Oshtemo

Music In The Park Summer Concert Series

Join us at the Flesher Field Gazebo this summer for free family-friendly concerts! Picnics are welcome, alcohol is prohibited, bring a chair or blanket for lawn seating. The Oshtemo Rotary Club will have popcorn and water available for purchase. Concerts are on Sundays from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Music in the Park is brought to you by Oshtemo Friends of the Parks.



Remaining Dates and Performers:

- July 27 – Tomás Esparza Blues Band
- August 24 – Kitten and the Tonics

Community & Conversation over Coffee

If you have questions or concerns that you’d like to discuss with Township Supervisor Cheri Bell, then stop by the Township Hall during open office hours and say hello!

First and third Tuesdays of each month from noon to 1 p.m.

Where:

Public Meeting Room
Oshtemo Township Hall
7275 W. Main St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

If you can’t make it in person, you can always reach out via email:
cbell@oshtemo.org

Fall Family Event

Celebrate Fall at Drake Farmstead Park

Join us on Saturday, September 28, from 2 to 4 p.m. at Drake Farmstead Park (927 North Drake Road) for a festive afternoon



celebrating fall, Oshtemo’s farming heritage, and our newest community park. Held in partnership with the Oshtemo Historical Society’s Fall Open House, this event features live music, family-friendly crafts, local vendors, and guided tours of the historic Drake House. Enjoy the season and connect with your community in a beautiful, historic setting!

Storm Cleanup in Our Cemeteries

From Clerk Dusty Farmer

Recent storms caused considerable damage across our cemeteries, leaving fallen trees, debris, and structural issues that impacted many plots. The aftermath required immediate attention, and our maintenance team stepped up in a big way. Cleanup efforts have been both intense and extensive, with staff working diligently to restore the grounds to a respectful and peaceful state.

We know how important these spaces are to families, and we appreciate your patience as we continue repair efforts. Thank you to our hardworking team for their dedication during this challenging time.



Seasonal Reminders

Keep Oshtemo Clean: New Dog Waste Ordinance in Effect

A new ordinance, Section 221.000, has been enacted. This ordinance requires dog owners, or anyone in control of a dog, to promptly remove and properly dispose of pet waste in public areas and on private property they don't own or control. Improper disposal can pose health risks, contaminate water, and create unpleasant conditions for others.



This ordinance promotes a cleaner, safer community and will be enforced through municipal civil infraction citations and fines issued via the 8th District Court. Individuals with service or guide dogs are exempt, in accordance with disability laws. The ordinance also repeals any previous conflicting regulations.

Let's work together to keep Oshtemo clean and welcoming. Please carry waste bags and clean up after your dog every time. This simple act helps protect public health, preserve natural areas, and show respect for neighbors and fellow park-goers.

Tidy Yards, Healthier Community: Lawn and Plant Growth Ordinances Enforced

To protect public safety, property values, and neighborhood appearance, Oshtemo Charter Township is enforcing updated lawn and vegetation ordinances.

Under Section 211.007, property owners, tenants, or land controllers must keep lawns trimmed below ten inches. If not, the Township may mow the property and bill the owner.

Ordinance 211.006 requires cutting unmanaged plant growth within six feet of roads or three feet behind sidewalks. Vegetation must not encroach onto neighboring properties. While agricultural and rural residential zones are generally exempt, subdivisions and site condominiums must comply.

Safeguard Your Home: Free Property Fraud Alerts

From Treasurer Clare Buszka

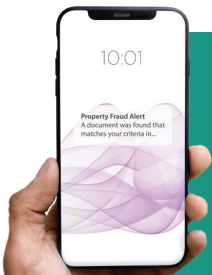


Did you know someone could record fraudulent documents against your property without you knowing? Oshtemo residents can now sign up for **Property Fraud Alert**, a free online service that notifies you if documents are recorded in your name at the County Recorder's Office.

While it can't stop fraud, this early warning system helps you respond quickly if suspicious activity occurs, protecting your home and your identity. With property and mortgage fraud on the rise, it is important to safeguard your property.

PROPERTY FRAUD ALERT

PROPERTY FRAUD occurs when someone records a fraudulent document in the county land records office, making it look like they own your home or property.



PROPERTY FRAUD ALERT is a notification service that alerts subscribers against the possibilities of fraudulent activity being committed against their property.

SIGN UP FOR FREE by visiting PropertyFraudAlert.com, by scanning the QR code with your phone camera, or call the Property Fraud Alert Hotline at 800-728-3858.



Register in English or Spanish
Registrese en inglés o español

Choose how you want to be notified!



Brought to you by
MEREDITH PLACE
Kalamazoo County Clerk
& Register of Deeds



Property Improvement Tips & Information

Do you have plans to add a shed, erect a fence, build an addition to your home, or any other property improvements? If so, please visit the township website to find out what you should know before beginning a project on your property.

oshtemo.org/departments/planning-zoning-department

Oshtemo is Growing: Help Shape Our Future!

Jodi Stefforia, Planning Director

Oshtemo Township is growing, and with that growth comes both exciting opportunities and new challenges. To make sure our future plans still match what the community wants and needs, the Township hired Progressive AE to create a new Comprehensive Master Plan, including a Master Streets Plan.



Over the past year, we've held community events and met with residents, local leaders, and others to gather ideas. Now, the planning process is almost done. A draft of the plan is expected to be presented at a Planning Commission meeting in August.

This plan reflects your voice, so we hope you'll join us! If you can't come in person, you can watch the meeting live or later through the Public Media Network. Meeting details and the draft plan will be posted on the Township website ahead of time.

Let's plan Oshtemo's future together!

Contact Us!

We'd love to hear from you.

Scan this QR code to view contact information for elected officials and staff, or reach out via phone at 269-375-4260 or via email at oshtemo@oshtemo.org.



Follow Us On Social Media!

[f](#) [in](#) @OshtemoCharterTownship
[t](#) [ig](#) @OshtemoTownship

Get Connected to Alerts & Updates from RCKC

kalamazooountyroads.com
269-381-3171
info@kalamazooountyroads.com



New Hire Bios

April 14, 2025: Alexis Tapper Human Resources Coordinator

Originally from Paw Paw, Alexis recently moved back from Grand Rapids to be closer to family and friends. She holds a BBA in Human Resource Management from WMU and a SHRM-CP credential. She brings HR experience and enjoys traveling, art, animals, home projects, staying active, and time with loved ones.

May 5, 2025: Karen Griffin Administrative Assistant

Originally from Southern California, Karen moved to Michigan to be near family and friends. She supports the Parks, Maintenance, and Building departments, bringing more than 20 years of administrative experience in medical, non-profit, and construction settings. A recent empty nester, she enjoys singing, dancing, and kayaking on Michigan’s lakes.

May 5, 2025: Hannah Hudson Parks Intern

Hannah Hudson is passionate about stories and community and has a background in outdoor and environmental education with a certificate in Interpretation and Recreation. After a pandemic-era trucking adventure with her husband, she landed in Oshtemo in 2021. Now, she’s actively involved in the Oshtemo Historical Society and local community engagement.

May 5, 2025: Dan Bennett Seasonal Park Ranger

Dan is originally from Paw Paw and has previously worked as a Seasonal Park Ranger for Oshtemo Parks in 2020 and 2021. Taking a summer break from his English studies at WMU, he has returned to the Parks Department. Dan values community service and hopes to work in a library one day. He enjoys fantasy novels, comedy, music, and magic tricks.



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

Township Board

Supervisor Cheri Bell
269-216-5258 | cbell@oshtemo.org
Clerk Dusty Farmer
269-216-5259 | dfarmer@oshtemo.org
Treasurer Clare Buszka
269-216-5260 | cbuszka@oshtemo.org
Trustee Zak Ford
269-271-5513 | zford@oshtemo.org
Trustee Kristin Cole
269-375-4260 | kcole@oshtemo.org
Trustee Neil Sikora
269-760-6769 | nsikora@oshtemo.org
Trustee Michael Chapman
810-730-9576 | mchapman@oshtemo.org

OSHTEMO NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2025 EDITION



Important Dates

Holiday Office Closures

Offices will be closed July 4 and Sept. 1. Offices will also be closed until 9 a.m. on the first Thursday of each month for staff meetings.

Shred Day

On Saturday, Sept. 13 from 10 a.m. to noon the township will host Shred Day. Visit oshtemo.org/events for details.

Board Meetings

Visit the Boards & Committees page on our website for current schedule information.
oshtemo.org/boards-committees