

Parks Department

Carriage Barn Improvements

The Carriage Barn at Drake Farmstead Park is getting a kitchenette! We have partnered with Kirshman Kitchen Design Studios and Pennings & Sons, who have both made generous donations to the project.

Kirshman Design Studios has provided the cabinets for the project at cost, and Pennings & Sons are donating the installation work. We sincerely thank our community partners who have made this project possible.

Pictured here is a rendering of what the kitchenette will look like when it is finished. If you are looking for a space to hold an event (such as a wedding, meeting, birthday party, bridal shower, etc.), please contact our office.



Fruit Belt Rail Trail

Plans for the development of the Fruit Belt Rail Trail take a major leap forward with the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund granting the Township an award of \$711,000. This funding will facilitate the development of approximately two miles of trail, transforming a historic rail corridor into a vibrant recreational space for the community. We are extremely grateful to the State of Michigan for this financial support.

The trail will be 10 feet wide with a crushed stone surface for non-motorized activities, and amenities such as benches, wayfinding and interpretive signage, paved parking areas, and even a bicycle repair station.

The property, once part of the Kalamazoo, Lake Shore, and Chicago Railway, has evolved over the years. In 2021, the Township acquired the approximately 35-acre property from Ameritech/AT&T, paving the way for its transformation into an inviting destination for outdoor enthusiasts of all ages.

This project is a priority of the “GO! Green Oshtemo Plan for Parks & Recreation, Nonmotorized Transportation,

& Conservation”, and we are especially pleased to be meeting that goal.

Although this section of trail is only two miles long, we hope that it will one day connect to another regionally significant rail trail between Kalamazoo and South Haven.

Construction is slated to start in 2025. Contact the Parks Department to learn more about the project, or get involved as a volunteer.

Music in the Park Concert Series

We are pleased to present the lineup for the 2024 Music in the Park Concert Series, presented by Oshtemo Friends of the Parks.

You are invited to join us for free, family-friendly concerts held at the Gazebo at Flesher Field Park from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on the following dates:

- June 2 - *Blue Water Ramblers*
- July 14 - *The Iconix*
- August 4 - *Hired Hands*

Bring a chair or blanket and join us on the lawn! Picnic dinners are welcome, but please note that alcohol and smoking are prohibited.

Infrastructure News

Sewer Update



The sanitary sewer expansion project remains on hold while our Public Works and Legal departments work to close the USDA bonds needed to complete Phase 1 and Phase 2. At this time, we do not have a timeline for the start of construction on the remainder of Phase 1 and

of Phase 2. Despite these hurdles, the Township continues to invest in sanitary sewer expansion. The installation work along Seventh Street and along M-43 between Seventh Street and Eighth Street has resumed with the thawing weather, and will be completed later this year.

We will share more information as it becomes available.

Traffic Calming Activities Underway for Green Meadow Dr., Skyridge Ave., and Driftwood Ave. Neighborhood

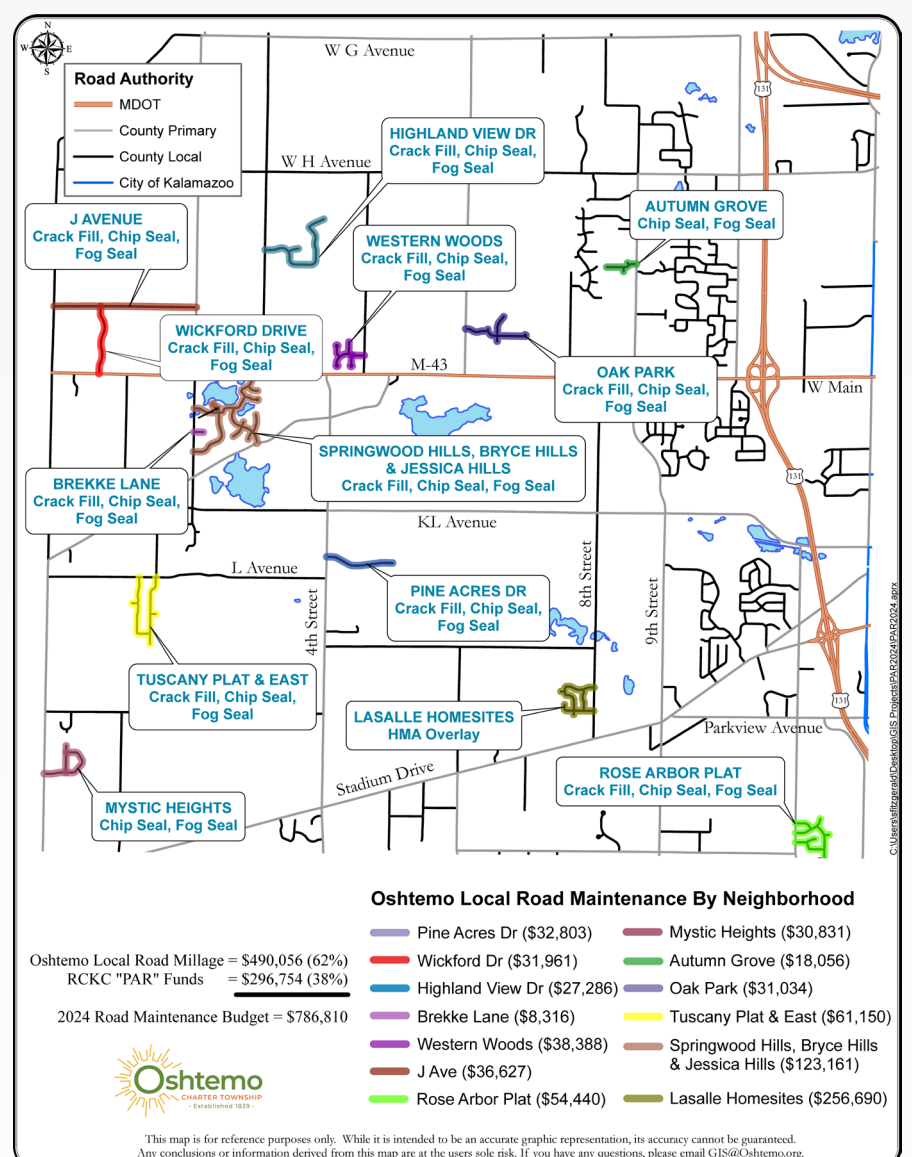
Speeding (and other unsafe driving habits) are a major issue for residents living in the Skyridge neighborhood. The posted speed limit is 25 mph, but some drivers have been clocked going as much as 30 mph over the limit! With the proximity to schools and senior living, residents have petitioned the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) via the “Neighborhood Traffic Management Policy” to look at short and long term solutions to these concerns. If temporary enforcement measures implemented by the RCKC prove ineffective, physical calming measures may be considered (like speed bumps).

While these measures are generally effective at slowing people down, they come with a price tag. Not only is there a cost to install the infrastructure, but there can also be increased costs for additional wear and tear on vehicles, and decreased fuel efficiency. Please consider the safety of yourself and others, and follow all posted traffic rules.

2024 PAR(ticipation) Projects with RCKC



Every year, Oshtemo Charter Township and RCKC allocate funds for preventative and routine maintenance projects on the county local roads. This map outlines the projects planned for 2024:



View this map on our website: oshtemo.org/2024-PAR-Map

At Your Service

From Supervisor Cheri Bell



New Bulk Trash / Recycling Dropoff Voucher System Offers More Flexibility, Expanded Service to Residents

Oshtemo Charter Township has offered its residents a service to dispose of bulk household trash items that are too large for regular household trash by bringing it to the Township Hall for more than 40 years. Affectionately known as “Dump Day”, the service has remained largely unchanged since it started. One thing that has not stayed the same is the number of residents using the service. Early last year, we began to see a major uptick in the number of users compared to previous years. Cars started lining up more than a hour before the start time, and the lines got so long that vehicles were backed up onto M-43.

As the number of users steadily rose over time, the Township had to take measures to ensure the safety of residents and our staff. The Sheriff’s Department got involved, and the Maintenance Department assigned more staff to try to keep the event under control.

By the end of 2023, it was obvious to the Township Board that this service which had run smoothly for many years had simply outgrown the capabilities of our staff to safely and efficiently manage.

A number of alternative options were explored, including curbside pickup, working with a waste transfer facility, and several hybrid options. Ultimately, it was determined that partnering with Waste Not Recycling would provide the best balance of service to residents and cost to the Township.

Starting in April, residents will be able to obtain Bulk Trash / Recycling Dropoff Vouchers from the township hall, one voucher per residential address per month. Each voucher will allow residents to bring up to four yards of bulk household trash items to the Waste Not Recycling transfer facility at the southeast corner of Ravine and Nichols Road. Residents can use the service anytime during the facility’s regular business hours (Monday-Friday 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. to noon, Sunday closed) with a valid voucher. Waste Not Recycling’s staff will be available to help residents unload their items inside of their covered facility.



Residents wishing to dispose of more than four yards of bulk trash in one month may choose to pay a fee for the excess, or bring the remainder back the following month with their next voucher.

The voucher will list the resident’s address, and the resident must present a photo ID with a matching address to the facility’s staff in order to redeem the voucher.

Visit our website or call 269-375-4260 for the most up-to-date information on this program.

Contact Us!

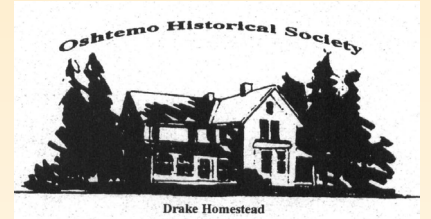
We’d love to hear from you.



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**.

Oshtemo Historical Society

Free Monthly Programs at the Oshtemo



Township Hall, March to November

Programs are held at the Oshtemo Township Hall (7275 W Main Street), and start at 7 p.m.:

- **April 18** - Jerry & Patricia Midkiff, Pre-1840s Fur Traders
- **May 16** - Rochelle Balkam, Michigan One Room School Houses
- **May 19** - 20th Anniversary Open House (Held at the Drake Farmstead Park, not the Township Hall)
- **June 20** - Sharon Ferraro, 1918 Flu Pandemic

Trash / Recycling Dropoff Voucher



Hours of Operation
Mon-Fri 7am to 5pm
Sat 8am to Noon
Sun Closed

Facility Location
3025 Ravine Rd
Kalamazoo MI 49004

This Voucher is Not Valid unless Embossed with the Oshtemo Charter Township Seal

This voucher is valid only in the month of **SAMPLE** and may not be combined with another month’s voucher.

The maximum load per voucher is 4 yards. For reference, 1 yard is about the same volume as a washing machine.

If you have more than 4 yards of trash, you may choose to take the excess with you or dispose it for an additional fee.

Resident must present photo ID, and address must match this voucher.

Voucher # SAMPLE
Resident Name SAMPLE
Resident Address SAMPLE
Yards Charged to Township
Date of Redemption

New Interactive Cemetery Maps



The Clerk’s Office has launched a new interactive cemetery map, where you can view each cemetery, view plots available for purchase, reserve a plot, and view other information. Visit the link below, or contact the Clerk’s Office for more information.

oshtemo.org/About-Oshtemo/Cemeteries

Featured Events in Oshtemo



Oshtemo Community Center
6407 Parkview Avenue
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49009

Senior Activities

Tuesdays & Wednesdays at the Oshtemo Community Center

Card Games (Tuesdays from noon to 3 p.m.)
Admission Fee: Free!

Chair Yoga (Wednesdays from 1 to 2 p.m.)
Admission Fee: \$5, paid to instructor.
Additional donations are welcomed.

All seniors are welcome to attend. Advanced sign up is not needed. Cancellations will be posted on the Oshtemo Township website calendar at oshtemo.org.

Stay Informed About Development in Oshtemo



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

Where Do Your Taxes Go?

From Treasurer Clare Buszka

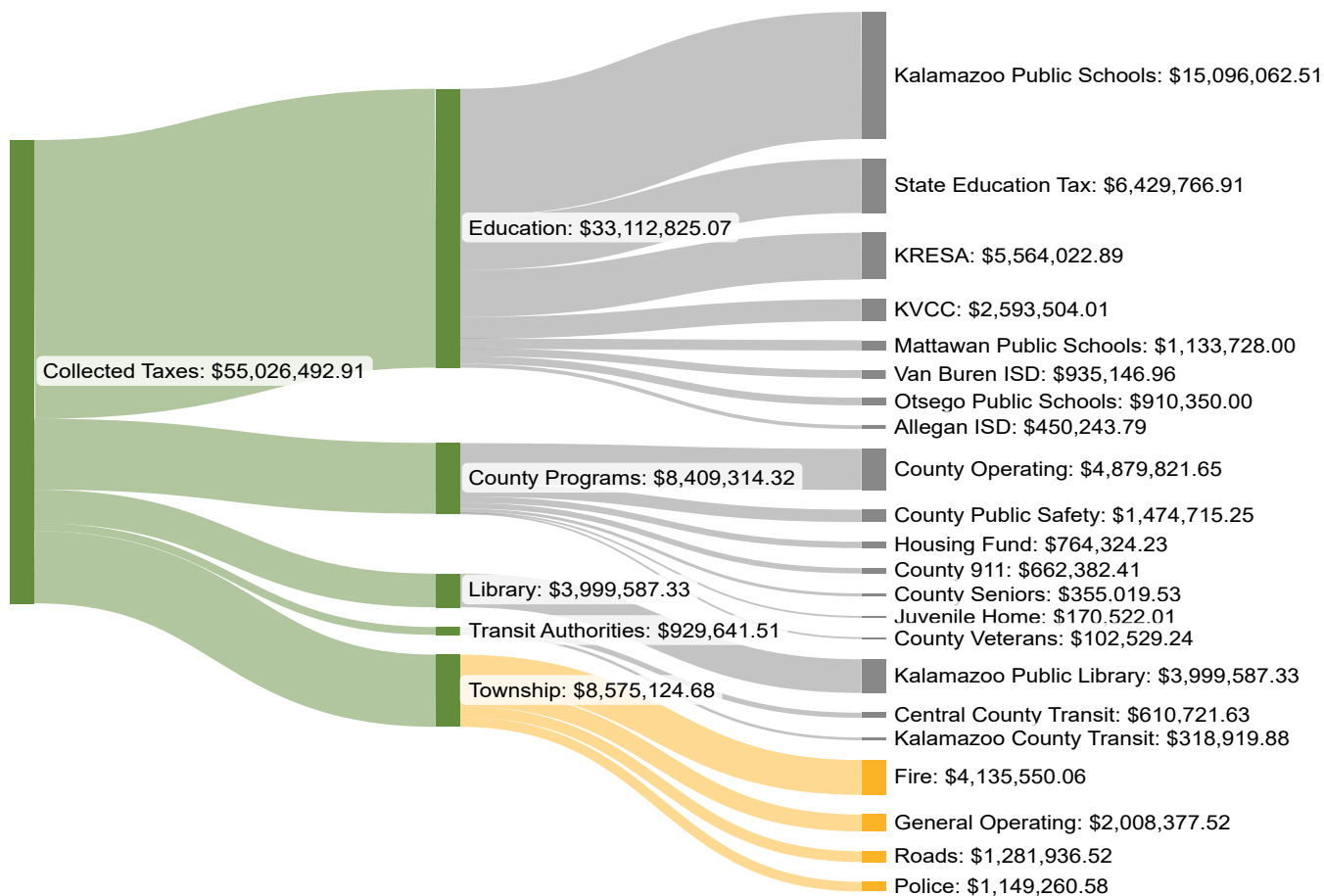


The treasurer's office collected over \$55 million dollars in tax revenue for the 2023 tax year. One of the most common questions we get about taxes is what the Township is doing with all that money.

The truth is, most of the tax money we collect does not stay in the Township's coffers. This year, \$33.1 million went to education. That

includes the State Education Tax, Kalamazoo, Mattawan, and Otsego Public Schools, Allegan ISD, Van Buren ISD, KRESA, and KVCC. \$8.4 million went to County Programs, including the County's General Operations, Public Safety, 911, Seniors, Veterans, Housing, and the Juvenile Home. An additional \$4.9 million went to the Kalamazoo Public Library and Transit Authorities.

\$8.5 million stayed in the Township. Of that, \$4.1 million went to the fire department; \$2 million went to general township operation; \$1.2 million went to roads; and \$1.1 million went to our police contract with the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department.



Safety News

Burn Ordinance & Burn Permits



With spring (and weekend yard work) both well underway, the Fire Department wants to remind residents that a permit is required for the open burning of yard waste. You can obtain a free burn permit through our website at oshtemo.org or by calling the Fire Department at 269-375-0487.

To keep yourself and your neighbors safe, please abide by the following safety rules outlined in ordinance §256.000:

- Open burning can only occur when weather conditions are favorable and wind conditions are no greater than 15 MPH.
- Burning must be more than 25 feet from any structure or other combustible materials, and a distance of 50 feet for piles greater than 3 feet wide by 2 feet high.
- The burning of material containing paper products, building material, lumber, or lumber products is prohibited unless it is being burned in a burn barrel.
- A garden hose or fire extinguisher must be available at the burning site.
- Burning materials must be constantly supervised until the fire is completely extinguished.

The Fire Department may order that burning cease if the burning is unsafe or if smoke emissions are deemed to be hazardous. A Municipal Civil Infraction may be issued if the burn ordinance is violated.

Election News

From Clerk Dusty Farmer



We have received positive feedback from voters following the Presidential Primary in February, the first election in Kalamazoo County to utilize early voting. In addition to no-reason absentee voting, voters can now cast their ballot in-person for nine days (starting the second Saturday and ending the Sunday before) a State or Federal election. We have partnered with Kalamazoo County to run four early voting sites, currently held at the County Expo Center, Portage Parks & Rec., the Fetzer Center, and the

Douglass Community Center. Voters can visit whichever location is most convenient.

Looking forward, we will have a small special election on May 7 for voters in the Mattawan Public School district. The State and Local Primary election will be on August 6, and the Presidential election will be on November 5.

My office is certified by the State to train election workers and ensure safe and secure elections. We are accepting applications for election inspectors and especially need Republican workers to maintain a healthy balance in the precincts. Workers are trained, certified, and paid at least \$15 / hour. Contact the Clerk's office for more information.

Is Your Streetlight Out?

Streetlight issues, including outages or repairs, can be reported directly to Consumers Energy by visiting consumersenergy.com/outages/street-light

New Ridesharing Service to Launch in Oshtemo

Metro Rolls Out Pilot Program



Metro is introducing Metro Link, an app-driven, on-demand rideshare service that combines the best aspects of public transportation with the flexibility of private on-demand transportation services. The pilot service is set to launch April 15 and run through the end of 2025.

Metro Link will provide rides in three distinct service areas overlapping with existing bus routes, making it easy to extend a trip to the downtown transportation hub and beyond.

A rider in the Oshtemo service zone will be able to book a ride through the new Metro Link app (available starting on April 10) or by calling 269-388-6373. The rider will be matched with others headed in the same direction for a quick, efficient shared trip. The app will also show riders the option to take fixed-route trips to their destination. The base fare of the rideshare service will be \$1.50 with discounts for seniors and those with disabilities. Payment can be made by debit or credit card through the Metro Link app when booking the ride. Metro Link has partnered with Via, a global leader in this developing form of public transportation with proven results in other Michigan communities.

To view the full press release from Metro, visit: oshtemo.org/news

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Get Connected to Alerts & Updates from RCKC

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



New Hire Bios

12/01/2023: Elvira Oropeza — Building Department Administrator

BIO: Hola! I moved to Kalamazoo in 1985, married and have two adult daughters. I am bilingual (Spanish and English). In 2017, after 17 years working as a pharmacy billing technician, I went back to school at KVCC where I obtained an associate degree in occupational technical studies. During that time, I joined the Southwest Michigan Building Authority where I worked for the last five years, and I am now excited to join Oshtemo Township. I am looking forward to the professional and personal growth opportunities here, where I can share my passion for education and the environment. Outside of work I enjoy live music, art hop, DIY crafting and spending time with my family enjoying the outdoors.

12/01/2023: Kyle Gibson — Media & Communications Manager

BIO: I am happy to be joining the Oshtemo Township team after six years of working with township staff in my previous role for the Southwest Michigan Building Authority. In addition to my experience working as a freelance videographer, photographer, and web designer, I also graduated from WMU in 2020 with a BA in Communication Studies. I look forward to using my skills to share engaging information with residents about the important work that your township's government is doing. When I'm not working, I enjoy relaxing with my husband (Jalen) and our dog (Levi), checking books off my "to be read" list, re-watching old TV series, and donating my time to local community organizations.

12/05/2023: Colin McKee — Fire Department Resident Intern

BIO: I was born and raised in Kalamazoo, MI, where I recently graduated high school. I am extremely excited to have been selected for the OFD residential internship program where I can work hands-on with our firefighters, while also attending the Fire Academy and taking classes at KVCC. My goal is to become

a skilled firefighter and serve the community. On my off time, I enjoy fishing, hunting, being outdoors, and playing soccer.

12/22/2023: Dr. Stephen Godfrey — Paid On Call Fire Fighter

BIO: I grew up in Indiana just south of Indianapolis, graduating from Purdue for college, and eventually Indiana University School of Medicine. I moved to Kalamazoo in summer of 2020 for residency, and have lived in Oshtemo since 2021. I've been active in the EMS world for a few years now, and am excited to now be a part of the fire department and taking a more active role directly within the township I've lived in the past several years.

02/05/2024: Jake Della Pia — Training & Safety Captain

BIO: I worked as a Fire Fighter/Paramedic for the past 10 years in Grand Traverse County, and I previously served Oshtemo Township as a Paid on Call Fire Fighter from 2006-2010. I'm a Veteran, serving from 2008-2018 in both the United States Army and MI Army National Guard. I am a graduate of Western Michigan University with BA's in Business Management and Strategic Planning. Most importantly, I'm a proud Daddy of my 6-year-old daughter Everley and my 2.5-year-old Golden Lab Bo. My hobbies include reading, hunting, fishing, hiking with Bo, and riding my Harley.

02/05/2024: Scott Fuller — Captain of Community Risk Reduction

BIO: I was raised in nearby Westwood, attended Kalamazoo Schools, then Western Michigan University earning a BA in Sociology and Psychology. I also earned an Associate of Science in Fire Science. I began my fire service career 10 years ago as a resident intern for OFD. Over the ten years as a fire fighter and EMT, I trained and qualified as a Driver/Pump Operator, Inspector, Instructor, Investigator, Plans Examiner, HAZMAT Technician and Fire Officer. I am a member of the Kalamazoo County HAZMAT Response Team, Kalamazoo County Fire Investigators Team and Michigan Fire Inspectors Society. I reside in Oshtemo with my wife and 1 child.



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
269-216-5224 | dfarmer@oshtemo.org

Treasurer Clare Buszka
269-216-5221 | 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

SPRING 2024



Important Dates

2024 Shred Days

From 10 a.m. to noon:
April 27, and September 14

2024 Trash Days

See Page 2 For More Information

Holiday Office Closures

Offices will be closed May 27, June 19, and July 4.
Offices will also be closed until 9 a.m. on the first Thursday of each month for staff meetings.