

aroundthe**state**

townships in the spotlight



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Kalamazoo Charter Township

Kalamazoo Charter Township (Kalamazoo Co.) wraps around three sides of the city of Kalamazoo. It is one of the most populated townships in the state, with nearly 22,000 residents within its 12-square-mile borders. The township board's mission is to provide government services that promote a safe, healthy, accessible and economically viable community to live, work, learn and play.



Officials say that the township is where residents can find their piece of the new American dream. The township offers quality residential living with open space—all within walking, biking or transit distance from work and play. It's made up of distinct and diverse neighborhoods, and a sense of community is encouraged by allowing street closures for block parties, little league parades, neighborhood garage sales, and other activities.

Every week brings new activities at the county's Expo Center in the Lakewood neighborhood, including car or dog shows, flea markets and a county fair. In Eastwood, there's

a community garden on a former school site. Northwood abuts a county park with camping, swimming and tennis, and is home to a beautiful stretch of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail. Westwood, adjacent to Western Michigan University, is home to the township's golf course, and several of the township's parks. A full 75 percent of the houses in the township are eligible for the Kalamazoo Promise scholarship.

The township is investing in its future. A survey of residents led to a strategic plan that includes better roads and communication. The voters approved a bond issue to pay for upgrading all local roads over three years. The board also adopted complete streets and passed a non-motorized transportation plan, which is being implemented. An updated parks and recreation plan will help in seeking funding to increase recreation. The township's master plan has been updated and a new form-based zoning ordinance should be adopted this summer.

The township had one of the first curbside recycling programs in the state, was an early adopter of single stream recycling and now has single-hauler garbage service. This saves wear on roads, and cuts down on noise, pollution and costs.

Kalamazoo Charter Township works with other governments in several areas, including consolidated dispatch and a countywide transit authority. Kalamazoo Charter Township is looking forward to, and embracing, its future.

