

# Cascade Connections



2026 | EDITION 2

Cascade Charter Township Newsletter



## from the **Supervisor**

Dear Cascadians,

As we welcome longer days and warmer weather, we are all looking forward to spending more time outside. Cascade Township projects kicking off this spring include pathway improvements, road work, working closely with EGLE on continued PFAS remediation, and Tuffy/Tassell Park improvements. Details are included in this newsletter.

I want to thank so many of you for sharing your thoughts and suggestions over the last year regarding the new zoning ordinance. I particularly appreciated the opportunity to talk with many of you who attended the open houses on the ordinance. After a year of public meetings, open houses, and robust discussions, the Board of Trustees adopted a new zoning ordinance on February 11. The new zoning ordinance is organized for clarity and fair enforcement. It also aligns with the community's long-term vision for growth: *ensuring future development complements, not erodes, Cascade's unique character and residents' quality of life.*

Let's clarify a few misconceptions regarding the new zoning ordinance.

### **DATA CENTER PROTECTION**

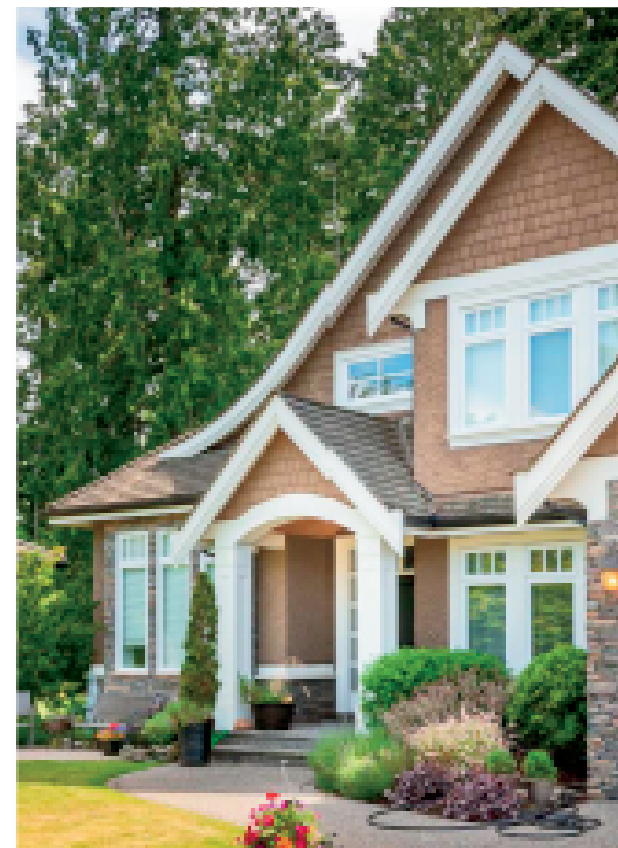
The Board of Trustees addressed this issue separately by approving a **moratorium** on the issuance of all Township permits, licenses, and approvals related to the establishment of data centers at its February 25 meeting. This temporary moratorium preserves the status quo while the Township evaluates legally sound regulations governing data centers.

### **USE OF EMINENT DOMAIN**

Eminent Domain is the process by which the government can seize private property when it is a "necessity" without the owner's consent. This legal doctrine has nothing to do with zoning. No "necessity" exists which requires the Township's taking of public property in the village or anywhere in the Township. This has never been considered or discussed by Township leadership.

### **DENSITY**

At present, property values in Cascade are among the highest in Kent County. This is because Cascade is a desirable place to live and do business. At the same time, Cascade is fortunate to have a diverse variety of housing options - from apartments and condominiums to single-family neighborhoods and rural farmlands. The new zoning preserves Cascade's housing diversity - in both size and price - by ensuring that the right kind of growth happens in the right places.



## from the **Supervisor** (cont'd)

### **ECONOMIC STUDY**

While economic analyses are common in the private sector, they are rarely done by local governments as part of the zoning process. This is because that type of analysis prioritizes short-term economic gains, without recognizing broader community and environmental goals, including the impacts on neighboring properties and the community (e.g. traffic congestion and available infrastructure), open space preservation, and quality of life.

The potential for bias is also great as this type of analysis is often offered by parties with a vested interest, potentially skewing the results in favor of their specific agenda. Lastly, economic models require making assumptions about future market conditions to calculate projected values, and long-term predictions - and impacts - are inherently uncertain.

### **BOTTOM LINE**

The debate is really about density. Some want larger apartment complexes than allowed, higher density in rural areas, and fewer restrictions in the village area. The facts are:

- Apartment complexes are still allowed in the same areas.
- In the small village area, future developments are limited to thirty-five feet in height with the first floor being commercial. This protects local businesses and encourages a walkable small-town feel in the village near the Thornapple River.
- Private roads are still allowed. However, to preserve Cascade's remaining rural character (primarily east of Buttrick Ave), the number of homes allowed on new private roads was reduced.

We have all seen communities who have failed to address growth and development pressures. The new zoning ordinance is a reasonable and essential tool to assist in the preservation of Cascade's unique character that we all treasure.

It is an honor to serve as your Supervisor. As always, please feel free to contact me with your ideas, thoughts, and suggestions.



### **Grace Lesperance**

Cascade Charter Township Supervisor  
[glesperance@cascadetwp.com](mailto:glesperance@cascadetwp.com)

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**“The new zoning ordinance is organized for clarity and fair enforcement. It also aligns with the community’s long-term vision for growth: ensuring future development complements, not erodes, Cascade’s unique character and residents’ quality of life. “**

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from the **Clerk** Sue Slater

### GET READY FOR THE 2026 MID-TERM ELECTIONS

The 2026 election year will be an important **mid-term election** for Michigan, and we want to be sure all registered voters are ready and confident when voting. In mid-term elections like this, we choose leaders who will represent us at the state and federal levels - and *every vote matters*.

#### WHAT'S COMING UP

- The statewide Primary Election is **Tuesday, August 4, 2026**
- The **General Election** is **Tuesday, November 3, 2026**

In this mid-term cycle, Michigan voters will have decisions to make on:

- Governor and other statewide offices, including Secretary of State and Attorney General
- Your U.S. Senator and U.S. Representative
- Every seat in the Michigan Legislature and State Supreme Court seats
- Potential ballot proposals

If you ever have questions — about deadlines, voting methods, or what will be on your ballot — please call the Clerk's Office.

We're here to help make voting clear, easy, and convenient for you and your family.

As always, thank you for participating in local government!

#### MICHIGAN VOTING REMINDERS

- You can register to vote or update your address up through Election day at your local Clerk's office by providing proof of residency
- **Election day voting** - you may vote in your designated precinct on Election Day from 7am to 8pm
- **Absentee voting** - you may vote Absentee for any reason; Absentee Ballots are available 40 days before each election. Absentee Ballots must be received by 8:00 pm on Election Day to be counted.
- **Early voting** for both elections will occur at the **Wisner Center** for nine days (July 25- August 2 and October 24-November 1).
- All Cascade registered voters were sent an **updated Voter ID Card in 2025** with our updated precinct information. Please review this **PRIOR** to voting on Election Day. The new Precinct Map can be found on the Township website.

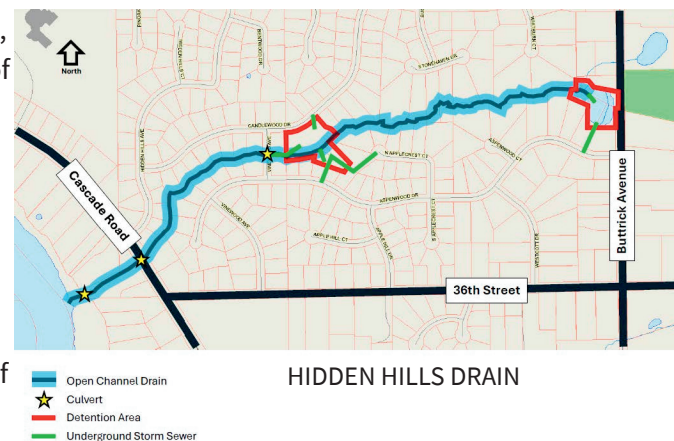


from the **Treasurer** Windy Korstange

#### DRAIN ASSESSMENT - WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

The Kent County Drain Commissioner is responsible for establishing, improving, and maintaining more than 536 miles of County Drains and 356 stormwater detention ponds in Kent County.

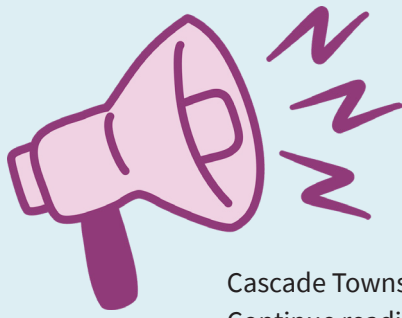
Generally, the County incurs 20% of maintenance costs, the township is assessed 20% of the costs, and residents who live where the drains are located are assessed the remaining amount. Recently, the Township received a Drain Assessment notice from the Drain Commissioner for maintenance of the Hidden Hills drain. Residents in that area also received a notice. As a result, in January, the Township Board voted to approve a one-time \$113,178 lump-sum payment of this assessment to avoid \$27,000 in interest charges over 6 years.



HIDDEN HILLS DRAIN

For more information about Drain Assessments, visit <https://www.kentcountymi.gov/817/Drain-Commissioner>.

To reach the Township's Treasury Office, contact 616-949-6944.



# ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE

Cascade Township’s Zoning Ordinance was passed by the Township Board on February 11, 2026. Continue reading to learn more.

## Top Five Zoning Ordinance FAQs

### Why wasn’t an economic analysis conducted before the passage of the Zoning Ordinance?

While an economic analysis sounds good in theory, there is always a potential for bias if conducted by parties with a specific agenda. An economic analysis also often focuses more on economic gains instead of social goals, such as preserving the character and community feel that residents of Cascade want.

### Does the new Zoning Ordinance decrease my property values?

While no ordinance can guarantee specific market outcomes, this ordinance is intended to maintain & enhance property values by strengthening the factors that make Cascade a sought-after place to live.

### Does the proposed Zoning Ordinance allow for more residential homes throughout the community?

Yes, increased residential is allowed in the Centennial Park Overlay where the necessary infrastructure exists in the appropriate areas. Additionally, residential is now allowed in the Starr and Glenwood Overlay.

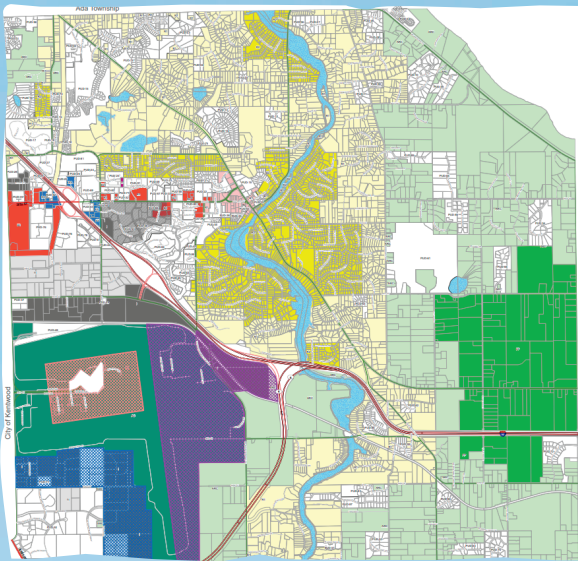
### Does the Zoning Ordinance include protections from data centers?

No data centers have expressed interest in any Cascade property and the Township has placed a moratorium on any data center approval until appropriate regulation is in place.

### Will the Zoning Ordinance change the character of Cascade?

The community strongly supports preservation of Cascade’s unique natural and built environment. The Zoning Ordinance was created with both development and preservation in mind. When a property owner chooses to develop or redevelop their property, they will be able to use the tools of the proposed Zoning Ordinance to do so.

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR A FULL LIST OF FAQs



#### Legend

FP, Farmland Preservation	TI, Transitional Industrial
ARC, Agricultural Rural Conservation	I, Industrial
R1, Residential	PUD
R2, Residential	AC, Airport Commercial
B1, Village Business	Overlay A
B2, General Business	Overlay B
ES, Expressway Services	Overlay C
O, Office	Centennial Park

“The Board of Trustees approved a moratorium on the issuance of all Township permits, licenses, and approvals related to the establishment of data centers at its February 25 meeting. This temporary moratorium preserves the status quo while the Township evaluates legally sound regulations governing data centers.”

Grace Lesperance, Township Supervisor

SCAN THE QR CODE TO REVIEW A COPY OF THE NEW ZONING ORDINANCE



For more information regarding Cascade Township’s new Zoning Ordinance, visit [cascadetwp.com/zoning](http://cascadetwp.com/zoning).

# Tassel Park

## IMPROVEMENTS

Renderings of the new concept for Tassel Park can be seen below. The goal is to maintain and improve the existing park, while also integrating new elements including construction of a boardwalk underneath the bridge along the river so residents have a safer way to cross Cascade Road. Other elements include walking trails, natural gathering areas along the riverbank, picnic spots, and more.

**TASSELL PARK SCHEMATIC MASTER PLAN**

THORNAPPLE RIVER DR. SE

EXISTING GARAGE

EXISTING PARKING

ADDED PARKING

EXISTING PAVILION

EXISTING RESTROOMS

CASCADE RD. SE

**LEGEND**

A. PARK SIGNAGE & FOUNTAIN	G. SUNKEN PLAZA AREA	N. FISHING PIER	U. SEAT WALLS
H. NATURAL PLAYGROUND	I. FLEX SPACE (FOOD TRUCKS)	O. ADIRONDACK CHAIR OVERLOOK	V. LAWN GAMES & PLAY
B. SPLASH PLAY AREA	J. EVENT PAVILION & PATIO	P. DAM OVERLOOK	W. LAWN OVERLOOK
C. BENCH SWINGS	K. FIRE PIT PLAZA	Q. HAMMOCK NATURAL AREA	X. BOARDWALK OVERLOOK
D. RIVER OVERLOOK	L. RUBY'S GAZEBO	R. SERVICE/EMERGENCY VEHICLE	Y. NATURAL AMPHITHEATER
E. BOARDWALK	M. SCULPTURE AREA	S. BEACH AREA	Z. BOARDWALK UNDERPASS
F. CASCADE WATER FEATURE		T. EVENT LAWN	

**TASSELL PARK MASTER PLAN**  
CASCADE TOWNSHIP, MI  
February 2026

trayer group | NATIVEDGE | F&V | CASCADE

Please provide feedback on the Tassel Park plan by scanning the QR code below.



For more information regarding the reimagining of Tassel Park, visit [cascadetwp.com/projects](http://cascadetwp.com/projects)



Rendering of a fish sculpture and seating area overlooking the river.



Rendering of the boardwalk overlooking the dam.

**FREE  
FAMILY  
EVENT**

# Concerts *in* Cascade

**Concerts in Cascade return this summer in Friendship Park!**

May 14<sup>th</sup> | Mark Dvorak | 7 pm

June 25<sup>th</sup> | Windbreakers | 7 pm

July 23 | Rin Tarnsy and Madrin | 7 pm

August 20 | Blue Water Kings Band | 7 pm

**Bring the family to sit on the lawn and listen to some music.  
Food and drinks will be available for purchase.**

**A special thank you to our sponsors  
who help make these events happen:**

**Friends of the Library  
Consumers Credit Union  
Scooters**

**Thornapple Brewery  
Downtown Development Authority**



## **WALKING CLUB IS BACK**

**Cascade Township's Parks & Facilities team invites you  
to join fellow residents this spring for our Walking  
Club!**

**Location: Cascade Recreation Park  
Meet at the bathrooms**

**Dates: May 6, 13, 20, 27 & June 3 & 10 | 10am**

**Free for all | no sign-up needed.**

**For up-to-date information including weather-related  
alerts, visit [facebook.com/CascadeTownship](https://facebook.com/CascadeTownship)**



## **Mahjong Tuesdays!**

**1-2:30pm**

**Located at the Wisner Center  
2870 Jacksmith Ave SE**

**Every Tuesday starting March 3 until May 26**

**Games provided, but if you have your own,  
please feel free to bring it!**

# CASCADE THE CLUTTER AWAY

As the season changes, residents are encouraged to take advantage of Cascade's spring cleaning programs.

## BAGGED YARD WASTE PICKUP

Bagged yard waste pickup will once again be offered in the restricted burn area (generally the area west of Buttrick Avenue and north of I-96) every Monday from April 13 through May 11.

## IMPORTANT UPDATE FOR 2026

Yard waste tags will be a different color this year. Tags from last year will NOT be accepted. New tags can be picked up at the Township Office. Only yard waste with new tags will be picked up.

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Tags are available 7 am to 4 pm Mondays through Thursdays and 8 am to 12 pm Fridays at the Cascade Township Office, 5920 Tahoe Drive SE. Residents are limited to 20 tags.

Place yard waste near the curb by midnight on Sunday.

Bags of yard waste and bundles of branches MUST be tagged for collection. Bags and bundles must weigh less than 30 pounds each to be picked up. Please do NOT include grass clippings, dirt, sod, cement, sand, rocks, or pet waste.

Branches and stumps cannot exceed one inch in diameter and four feet in length.

## YARD WASTE DUMPSTERS

Dumpsters will be available for yard waste disposal from April 13 through May 11. The dumpsters will be located behind Fire Station 2, 2990 Buttrick Ave. SE.

## PLEASE NOTE

The dumpsters are top load and yard waste needs to be carried up a small set of stairs to be dumped. Employees are not available to help dump yard waste.

All services subject to availability. Please check close to the day of service to ensure the program you wish to utilize is available.

For questions, please call Cascade Township at (616) 949-1500.

## JOIN OUR CREW

Cascade Charter Township  
is hiring!

SERVE YOUR  
COMMUNITY

NOW HIRING  
FULL-TIME

8

Read full job descriptions and apply today at  
[cascadetwp.com/opportunities](http://cascadetwp.com/opportunities)



## Cleanup Day

**\*NEW LOCATION\***

CASCADE TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS ONLY

Saturday, May 2 | 8am - 12pm

Cascade Recreation Park | 3810 Thornapple River Dr. SE  
Proof of Cascade Township residency is required (ID or bill).

### ITEMS ACCEPTED:

- Appliances
- Electronics
- Paint (open and dried)
- Scrap metal
- Paper for shredding

### ITEMS NOT ACCEPTED:

- Batteries
- Tires
- Yard waste
- Hazardous waste

### On-Site Services

**Arrowaste Services** will be on-site for general trash and junk, large and small appliances and scrap metal.

**Schupan Electronic Recycling** will be on-site for computers, televisions, small appliances, cell phones, and other electronics.

**West Michigan Document Shredding** will be on hand to securely destroy and recycle paper documents.

For more information on hazardous waste disposal, please visit [www.reimaginetrash.org](http://www.reimaginetrash.org).



# A NOTE From Your Cascade Library



## LEGENDARY READER CHALLENGE

Spring is coming, which means more time outdoors to explore and find those mythical creatures, like Bigfoot. Did you know that the library has a Legendary Reader Challenge for kids in kindergarten through 5th grade? Each year features a new legendary creature to earn a vinyl sticker and a prize. Kids have to read for 100 days over the course of the school year to earn a Bigfoot sticker and LED flashlight, perfect for reading under the covers. Turn in your Legendary Reader log at the Cascade Branch through May!

**For more information or to print a log, visit [kdl.org/legendaryreaders](http://kdl.org/legendaryreaders).**

## SPRING BREAK STAYCATION

Get ready for vacation during spring break right at your own library! Staycation begins April 2 through April 10. We have something exciting every day at 10 am and many events at 2 pm throughout the week, including magic, bubbles, and a Bluey Party. Retro Arcade is back and will be here on Friday, April 3, from 12–5 pm and Saturday, April 4, from 10 am–1 pm. Come and play games from the past like Pac-Man, Jurassic Park Pinball, and more! **For more details on these events and others, check out [kdl.org/events](http://kdl.org/events) or visit their Facebook page.**

## LIBRARY BOOK SALE

**The Friends of the Cascade Township Library book sale on March 14–15 was a huge success!** Thank you to everyone who donated books that were sold to help raise money for the library. All donated books are sold to help fund programs and offer scholarships for local students. They accept both small and large book donations. **Drop off your unwanted books at the Cascade Branch today and stay tuned for the next book sale in July!**



# Cascade Volunteers

## GARLIC MUSTARD PULLS

This invasive plant outcompetes native species and disrupts local ecosystems. We will be pulling these plants before they go to seed to prevent further spread.

**Where:** Burton Park, Windcrest Dr. entrance

**Dates:** Saturdays; April 4, 18, May 2, 16, 30

**Time:** 1–3 pm

## CASCADE GARDENS

The native plantings at Friendship Park and the library flower beds require spring maintenance to flourish later this summer.

**Where:** Friendship Park, Cascade Library entrance

**Dates:** Saturdays; April 11, 25, May 9, 23

**Time:** 1–3 pm

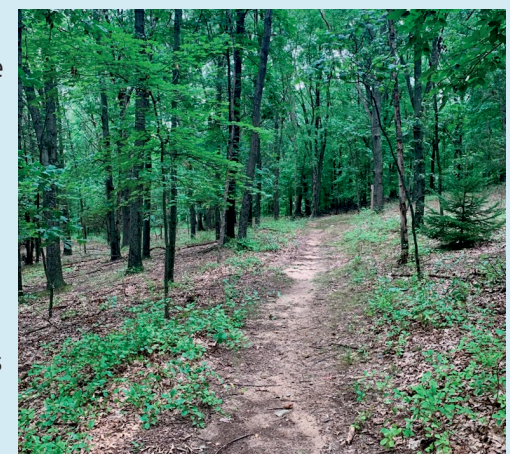
## TUESDAYS AT TEN

This group handles a wide variety of projects throughout Cascade Township parks and properties.

**Where:** Locations change weekly

**Dates:** Every Tuesday

**Time:** 10 am–12 pm



**For more information or to arrange an outing for scouts, students, employees, friends or family, contact Volunteer Coordinator, Jeanine at [JHeibel@CascadeTwp.com](mailto:JHeibel@CascadeTwp.com).**

# Roads & Pathways

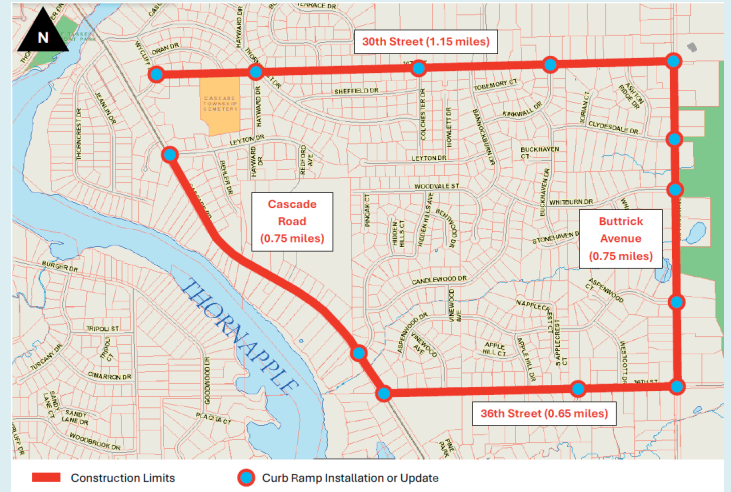


## 2026 PATHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The Township Board approved improvements of the following pathways slated for later this year. The specific segments include:

- 30th Street from Wycliff Drive to Buttrick Avenue (1.15 miles)
- Buttrick Avenue from 30th to 36th Street (0.75 miles)
- 36th Street from Cascade Road to Buttrick Avenue (0.65 miles)
- Cascade Road from 36<sup>th</sup> Street to Leyton Drive (0.75 miles)

The 2026 Pathways Improvement Project is a substantial next step in the task of addressing the conditions of the oldest segments of the pathway network. Continuing to commit funds ensures the safe and enjoyable use of the network.

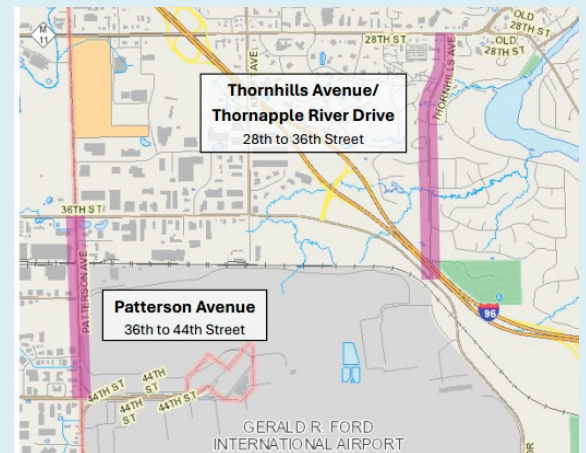


## 2026 ROAD IMPROVEMENTS IN CASCADE

The Kent County Road Commission is funding two road improvement projects in Cascade.

- Thornhills Avenue/Thornapple River Drive - 28th to 36th Street
- Patterson Avenue - 36th to 44th Street

Map of Kent County Road Commission  
2026 Road Improvements in Cascade Township



## PURCHASING PREFERENCE LIST

Local Cascade Township & Kent County Businesses:  
Sign Up to be included in the Township's Purchasing Preference List!

- Proposal Requests
- Bid Notices
- Local Preference Consideration

Visit [cascadetwp.com/business](http://cascadetwp.com/business) to learn more.

*Local Vendor bids that have been deemed "responsive, responsible, and fully compliant," and whose price is within 5% (Township-based) or 2% (County-based) of the non-local low bidder's price may be considered the lowest responsible bidder.*



CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

**LOCAL  
PURCHASE  
PREFERENCE  
LIST**



# LITHIUM-ION BATTERY SAFETY

## Contact Us

### Township Manager

Jade Smith  
616-949-1500  
jsmith@cascadetwp.com

### Township Assessor

Paula Jastifer  
616-949-6176  
pjastifer@cascadetwp.com

### Building Inspections

Brian Wilson  
616-949-3765  
bwilson@cascadetwp.com

### Community Planning & Development Director

Andrea Hendrick  
616-949-0224  
ahendrick@cascadetwp.com

### Township Engineer

Aric Thorne  
616-949-1500  
athorne@cascadetwp.com

### Finance & Budget Director

Lorna Nenciarini  
616-949-1500  
lnenciarini@cascadetwp.com

### Human Resources Director

Katie Murawski  
616-949-1500  
kmurawski@cascadetwp.com

### Parks & Facilities Director

Dan Zwick  
616-949-1500  
dzwick@cascadetwp.com

### Cascade Township Fire Department

Fire Chief / Non-Emergency  
Adam Magers  
616-949-1320  
amagers@cascadetwp.com

### Kent County Police Department

Sheriff / Non-Emergency Dispatch  
616-336-3113

### Community Policing Officer

Omar Dieppa  
616-632-6435  
omar.dieppa@kentcountymi.gov

## SIGNS OF A PROBLEM

Stop using the battery if you notice these problems: odor, change in color, too much heat, change in shape, leaking, or odd noises.

If it is safe to do so, move the device away from anything that can catch fire. Call 911.

## BATTERY DISPOSAL

- Do not put lithium-ion batteries in the trash
- Recycling is always the best option
- Take them to a battery recycling location or contact your community for disposal instructions
- Do not put discarded batteries in piles

## CHARGING AN E-BIKE

Charge your battery in a flat, dry area away from children, direct sunlight, liquids, tripping hazards, and in a location where the e-bike is not at risk of falling.



## SAVE THE DATE!

## MEMORIAL DAY EVENT

Cascade Township Fire Department will once again host a Memorial Day event this year. Stay tuned for additional details soon!



CASCADE TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT  
*Dedicated to Serving You*  
Station 1 616.949.1320 Station 2 616.259.7020



**National Fire Protection Association**  
The authority on fire, electrical, and building safety



NON PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
GRAND RAPIDS, MI  
PERMIT NO. 250

### Cascade Charter Township

5920 Tahoe Drive SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
616-949-1500  
cascadetwp.com

### Township Office Hours

Monday through Thursday: 7 am – 4 pm  
Friday: 8 am – 12 pm

**FREE  
FAMILY  
EVENT**

**Easter**

**EGG HUNT**

**March 28**

STARTS AT  
**10 am**

CASCADE RECREATION PARK  
3810 Thornapple River SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

**HOP ON OVER TO [CASCADETWP.COM](http://CASCADETWP.COM) FOR FULL DETAILS**

