

## Busy year ahead in 2021 for Orange Township

---

NEWS, TOP STORIES

By Gary Budzak - [gbudzak@aimmediamidwest.com](mailto:gbudzak@aimmediamidwest.com)

---



A major bottleneck in Orange Township is Orange Road, especially at the railroad tracks.

Gary Budzak | The Gazette

LEWIS CENTER — Parks and roads will be among the priorities for 2021, said an Orange Township trustee in a recent email to The Gazette.

“Due to the pandemic, our parks became even more important for our residents and became more heavily used,” wrote Trustee Debbie Taranto. “We made it a priority to get moving on our latest park, North Road Park, a multi-generational park, to be hopefully completed this year. It currently has soccer fields, but will boast pickle ball courts, basketball, playground with ADA equipment, a dog park, beautiful shelter, concession area, a one-mile trail around the park, and bathrooms. I think this park will be something we can all be proud of. This was approved in 2020.”

Whenever the Aquatic Center reopens, residents will notice repairs and upgrades, Taranto said. These were able to be done during the pandemic.

In addition, an ADA playground was installed by the pool.

“(It) is something that I had been working on for a couple of years, and it was really good to see it finally happen,” Taranto said.

Orange Township seems to add a park a year. Its recreation facilities include Glen Oak Park (where one can sled or ice skate in the winter), North Orange Park, Orange Bridge Park, Ro Park, and Walker Wood Park. There are also a number of trails, including over U.S. Route 23. A Veterans Memorial is also in the works.

Federal funds from the COVID-19 relief package were used to upgrade park restrooms, the township hall, and community room with touchless fixtures, Taranto said. Other improvements were made to the offices in the township hall.

“Many of our ponds have had many problems with algae and other issues,” Taranto said. “We made this a priority to get them repaired and cleaned up. This should be completed in 2021.”

In October, “We finalized the Route 23 corridor overlay which should hopefully diversify the tax base and provide more revenue generating opportunities that should benefit not only Orange Township but our schools,” Taranto wrote.

"Probably one of our most needed improvements is Orange Road," Taranto concluded. "We started the construction phase in 2018 and look to complete it in 2021, with the road widened and traffic lights installed. This will alleviate many of our safety issues. We also look to an underpass under the Orange Road railroad tracks within the next five years."

According to the township, the Orange Road Corridor improvement project includes adding through and auxiliary lanes at the U.S. 23 intersection; a traffic signal at Green Meadows Drive; a "Florida-T" intersection at Highfield Drive; turn prohibitions; and widening lanes along West Orange Road.