Issue #11 – Fall 2026

Sustainable Kent News

The latest on sustainability efforts in Kent

City of Kent Sustainability Commission

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Happy Fall everyone! The City of Kent has permanently designated October as Sustainability Month!

The October Sustainability Month Celebration invites all residents, schools, businesses, and organizations to join this celebration by participating in activities throughout the entire month that promote sustainable practices.

Everything from remembering to take your own bags to the grocery store to hosting a special event promoting sustainable practices qualify as contributing to this celebration. By showcasing sustainability efforts together throughout the month, we'll create a celebration as unique and special as Kent itself!

Be sure to visit the City's October Sustainability Month Celebration webpage for more information about how to participate and for a listing of community practices and events.

Keep reading below for a wonderfully packed edition providing updates on a variety of initiatives and sustainability work happening in the City and Kent community!

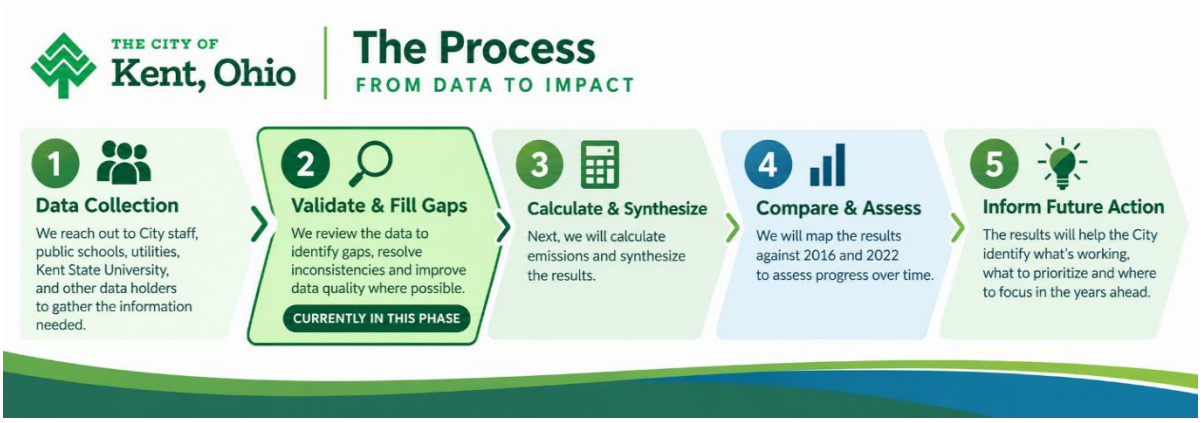
Should you ever have questions, comments, and/or suggestions related to the City's Climate Action Plan or other sustainability work, please feel free to contact the City's Sustainability Coordinator, Julie Morris, at: julie.morris@kentohio.gov.

CHRONICLING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Tracking Kent's Sustainability Progress: 2025 Greenhouse Gas Inventory Update

Greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories are an important tool for understanding a community's environmental impact and measuring progress toward its sustainability goals. Greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide and methane, trap heat in the atmosphere and contribute to climate change. By tracking emissions over time, cities can better understand their sources, evaluate the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives, and make informed decisions about where to focus future efforts. This data-driven approach helps communities build a more sustainable, resilient, and healthy future for residents.

The City of Kent continues this important work with its latest community-wide GHG Inventory, adding 2025 data to its previous inventories from 2016 and 2022. KERAMIDA, which originally supported the development of Kent's Climate Action Plan and has assisted with each inventory to date, is once again supporting the City in this effort. Using the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Inventories (GPC), an internationally recognized best-practice methodology, the project evaluates emissions across three key sectors: stationary energy (including buildings and energy use), transportation, and waste. Comparing these sectors across inventory years will help Kent understand how its emissions profile has changed and where additional action may have the greatest impact.



The project is currently in the data collection and validation phase. This involves coordinating with City staff, public schools, utilities, Kent State University, and other data holders to gather the information needed to develop a comprehensive picture of community-wide emissions. The team then reviews the collected data to identify gaps, resolve inconsistencies, and improve data quality wherever possible. Once this process is complete, the team will calculate and synthesize emissions results and compare them with the 2016 and 2022 inventories to assess progress over time. These findings will give the City a valuable decision-making tool to evaluate the effectiveness of existing efforts and identify priorities for future sustainability initiatives.

As Kent celebrates Sustainability Month, this work highlights the importance of measuring progress alongside taking action. A GHG inventory provides the foundation for understanding the impact of the City's efforts and identifying opportunities to create even greater community value. Beyond reducing emissions, sustainability initiatives can deliver meaningful co-benefits, including improved air quality and public health, lower energy costs, more accessible transportation options, reduced waste, greater climate resilience, and an enhanced quality of life for residents. By tracking progress and using data to guide decisions, Kent can build on its sustainability achievements and create a healthier, more resilient community for the future.

North Mantua St. Project Update

The plan for road improvements to a section of North Mantua St. including the northern entrance into the City of Kent are progressing and construction is anticipated to begin next spring.

The City, Kent City Schools, and Davey Tree are partnering to make improvements to a nearly half-mile section of N. Mantua St., from Needham Ave. to just beyond the northern Kent City limits. This well-traveled stretch of road includes Theodore Roosevelt High School, River Bend residential development and the corporate headquarters for Davey Tree. The project is part of the Transportation Strategies in Kent's Climate Action Plan, with a goal to improve active transportation options; including making it safer to walk and bike to school and constructing the first section of the Lake Rockwell Trail.

Planned improvements include a single lane roundabout at the relocated Davey Tree Dr. and N. Mantua St. intersection, the addition of a right turn lane exiting River Bend Blvd., an upgraded traffic signal at the Roosevelt Dr. intersection and a median boulevard. There will also be pavement resurfacing, curbing, driveways, sidewalks, shared use path, drainage, streetscaping, lighting, and signing and pavement markings. These improvements will integrate with the planned extension of the Lake Rockwell trail on the school district campus and Davey Tree's SEED campus.

The project design is nearly complete and the City is waiting for final approval from the State Department of Transportation. Davey Tree and Kent City Schools have each donated land for the construction and the land transfers are complete. Total cost of the project is $7.4 million and as of early October the City has received $5.3 million dollars in grants.

You can learn more about the planned improvements online. You can also contact City Engineer Jim Bowling at 330-678-8106 or Jim.Bowling@kentohio.gov.

Connected for Climate: Kent's Green Calendar



Interested in some brief highlights about the City's Climate Action Plan initiatives and other sustainability related work? Curious about sustainability-related events happening in the area each month? Stay tuned to the new Connected for Climate: Kent's Green Calendar webpage, as it will be updated with new information throughout every month moving forward!

We would be pleased to add your event to Kent's Green Calendar! Contact the City's Sustainability Coordinator, Julie Morris at **julie.morris@kentohio.gov** for more information about submission requirements, and with any questions you have about the below information.

Kent's New Eco-Village Project



The City's Planning Commission has approved a new, sustainable, 144-unit Eco Village housing complex for the vacant parcel situated between Marc's Plaza and SR261.

Described in more detail by the developer Urban Imperial Construction, L.L.C. (UIC), this project is a "a transformative net-zero multi-family sustainable housing community that complies with the City of Kent's development requirements and the strategic objectives outlined in Kent's Climate Action Plan (CAP). The project consists of three six-story structures containing a total of 144 two-bedroom sustainably constructed apartments, with a focus on leasing to veterans, seniors, and families. UIC intends to offer a minimum of 48 units available to tenants qualifying for the Portage Metropolitan Housing Authority's Project-Based Voucher (PBV) lease program."

UIC goes on to note "the Kent Eco-Village represents more than affordable housing; it is a model of sustainable living. The sustainable buildings will help reduce the utility bills and carbon footprint of the residents, while simultaneously creating a thriving community of local individuals and families. Our mission is to help expand the City of Kent's affordable housing inventory, through a vision of advancing our communities climate and sustainability goals." Start dates for construction are expected in 2027.

For more on the project description, site plan, and floor plans visit: kent-eco-village-project-description.pdf

VISIT OUR SUSTAINABILITY OVERVIEW WEBPAGE!

The City has a webpage to highlight its sustainability work and keep the community posted about related Climate Action Plan implementation progress, programs, news, events, and more!

Visit: https://www.kentohio.gov/business-building-development/sustainability-overview/

AROUND THE CITY

Portage Moving ForWaRD
By: Kent Environmental Council

Across Portage County, neighbors are launching a simple, practical idea that almost everyone can get behind: waste less food, feed more people, and keep good soil out of the landfill. It's called Portage ForWaRD, which stands for Food Waste Reduction and Diversion, and this fall it's rolling forward with a new countywide composting network built on partnership, common sense, and community pride.

The Scale of the Challenge

Food insecurity touches roughly one in six Ohioans, more than 1.8 million people statewide, and Portage County is no exception. An estimated 14.1% of Portage residents, about 22,700 of our neighbors, are facing food insecurity, including 16.5% of local children[1]. These aren't abstract numbers; they show up at Kent Social Services, at Ravenna's Center of Hope, and at pantries across our townships every week.

The last couple of years have made that need grow. When pandemic-era emergency food benefits ended in 2023, Ohio households lost more than $126 million a month in federal food assistance, and Ohio's foodbanks faced record demand: 14.66 million pantry visits in 2023 alone, followed by the highest six-month stretch of visits in the network's 35-year history by late 2024[2]. Then came new federal cuts to food-bank supply chains in 2025, which translated locally into real numbers: the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank reported losing two federal food programs, meaning 177,550 fewer pounds of food reaching Portage County's 26 pantries, senior programs, and youth meal sites[3]. Whatever anyone's politics, most of us agree on this: our neighbors shouldn't go hungry, and every community has a role to play in closing that gap.

Where the Food Actually Goes

Here's the twist: while families are going without, we are also throwing away enormous amounts of good, usable food. The USDA estimates that 31% of the entire U.S. food supply available at the retail and consumer levels—about 133 billion pounds, valued at roughly $161.6 billion—went uneaten in a recent benchmark year. Roughly a third of that loss happens at grocery stores; the other two-thirds happens in our own homes, restaurants, and cafeterias[4].

But that wasted food has to go somewhere, and it mostly goes into the landfills. Ohio currently operates 47 licensed solid waste landfills[5]. In the most recent statewide waste study, Ohio added 9,587,953 tons of material in

a single year, and nearly a quarter of that, 2,291,521 tons (23.9%), was compostable organic material. Food alone accounted for 1,252,858 tons, or 13.1% of everything Ohio buries[6]. Put another way: roughly one out of every four truckloads heading to an Ohio landfill is carrying something that could have fed a family or enriched a garden instead.

Why It Matters for Everyone

Landfill space is finite, and nobody wants the next one built next door, so anything we can do to extend the life of existing sites is a win for every township. There's also a climate and energy angle worth noting: although compostable waste is only about 24% of what goes into landfills, it generates an outsized 58% of landfill methane emissions, and methane is a far more potent driver of atmospheric warming than carbon dioxide, pound for pound[7]. That methane could be captured and burned as a fuel for homes, businesses, or vehicles, but today, only 13 of the 73 landfills in Ohio's tracked system are actually recovering that gas for energy[8]. That's untapped opportunity coming out of the ground, waiting to be put to work (think PARTA buses).

What You Can Do Starting Today

The good news is this is a problem any household can help solve, and every small habit adds up:

- **Shop Smart**. Buy only what your family will actually eat this week; it saves money at the register as much as it keeps food out of the trash.
- **Donate the Extra.** If your pantry, garden, or event has good surplus food, Portage County has real places ready to use it: Kent Social Services accepts fresh produce and welcomes calls to arrange convenient drop-offs; Flashes Fighting Hunger at Kent State runs an active weekly produce-rescue program; and Christian Cupboard–Ravenna/Center of Hope serves families through the Akron-Canton Foodbank network[9].
- **Compost It — Don't Trash It**. When food truly can't be eaten or donated, it belongs in a compost bin, not a garbage can.

Portage ForWaRD: Neighbors Building the Solution Together

Portage ForWaRD is a genuinely grassroots, multi-organizational effort led by the Kent Environmental Council, working alongside the Portage County Solid Waste District, the City of Kent's Sustainability Commission, Rubber City Reuse, the United Methodist Church of Kent, Kent State University, and Green Teams from churches across the county[10]. It's the kind of coalition—civic, academic, faith-based, and nonprofit—that shows what a community can build when it focuses on shared, practical goals instead of division.

The first visible piece of the puzzle is already in place: a free community compost drop-off bin behind the United Methodist Church of Kent (1435 E Main St, Kent, OH), made possible through the leadership of Pastor Nathan Howe and Green Team leader Claire Bank and through a donation from the Kent Environmental Council. It's open to any area resident—no fees, no hoops, just bring your food scraps. Use your won bucket or container and just dump the food scraps into the bin. Only BPI plastic bags are permitted but not necessary. More drop-off sites, coordinated through Portage ForWaRD, are on the way.

Portage ForWaRD is designed to work for real neighborhoods, not against them. It's a resident-driven program that gives everyday people the agency to make a difference, and every new site is chosen using real criteria such as population density, accessibility along commuter routes, and demonstrated community interest so the program grows where it will actually get used. Just as important, it's built to add new drop-off capacity without adding new collection trucks or traffic to our roads.

The plan ahead is a deliberate, three-phase expansion of free community composting sites across Portage County with steady, sustainable growth rather than a rushed rollout.

Reducing waste, feeding neighbors, and protecting the land we all share isn't a partisan issue; it's a Portage County issue, and it's one we can solve together, one bucket at a time.

Learn more, find a drop-off location, or get involved with Portage ForWaRD through the Kent Environmental Council (https://kentenvironment.org) or Rubber City Reuse (https://www.rubbercityreuse.com).

City of Kent 2026 Cuyahoga River Day Clean-up Success



The August 22, 2026, Cuyahoga River Clean-up event started at John Brown Tannery Park at 8:00am and ended at noon. We were fortunate to have it perfectly timed between the thunderstorms.

Twenty-nine people volunteered their Saturday mornings for some grueling yet fulfilling work. The group moved upstream from Tannery to the island in between the river and the remnants of the canal dragging the canoes. The John boats were lowered down the bank from Silk Mills Apartment's parking lot earlier in the morning by City of Kent Water Reclamation Division staff. We filled all four boats and made our way back to Tannery Park. Getting back to tannery was difficult, we had to move a lot boulders and cobbles in the riffles so that the boats did not run aground with the extra weight. We again went upstream with two boats after offloading for a second load.



Among the debris the volunteers found about 16 RR ties, 5 pallets, and possibly a few tons of scrap metal including old sections of sewer lateral, some sort of thick iron door possibly for a coal oven that weighed up to 300 lbs, a roughly 70 lbs pulley or come along with leaded weights attached to old netting, a 10 foot long two prong pitchfork with a looped handle, lots of RR car springs, and RR tie plates. Out of the ordinary for a river clean-up event not a single tire was found.

City of Kent staff from the Central Maintenance Division operated the loader and dump trucks to collect the roughly 5 tons of debris and Water Reclamation staff returned for two trips to collect the watercraft.



The group of volunteers though exhausted, all seemed to have had a great time and left with the feeling that they had made the world a little better. A few indicated that they looked forward to volunteering again next year.



It was hectic day, but we adapted well with changing the take-out location and notifying city staff of the altered plans. We collected maybe 5 tons of trash/debris, most of which had likely been there for several decades.



Summit e-Waste Recycling Solutions and Kent Free Library's Electronics Recycling Day Recap



On Saturday, September 26, 2026, Summit E-Waste Recycling Solutions and Kent Free Library hosted an Electronics recycling day event. In addition to offering free e-waste collection and on-site mobile hard drive shredding that day, Summit e-Waste Recycling Solutions donated $0.05 per pound of all material collected directly back to the Kent Free Library.

Benjamin Baker, Vice President of Summit e-Waste Recycling solutions shared the results of this event noting, “we saw 100 vehicles in attendance in the two hour period of the event. That is a remarkable amount of vehicles in only two hours. We collected a total of 5,700 lbs. of e-waste, which allows for a $285 donation to the Library Foundation.”

To learn more about their Community Electronic Recycle events, visit: https://summitecycle.com/community-recycle-events/

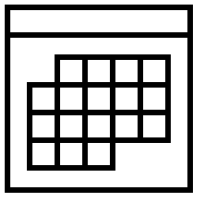


Park Education Center Survey
By: Portage Park District

We are in the early planning stages for our first Portage Park District Education Center! We are gathering input from community partners to assist in our planning process.

The Education Center will be more than just a building. It will be a gateway to conservation and exploration of our natural resources, a place for dynamic learning for all ages, a space to connect and build community, and a legacy for future generations. Imagine the possibilities! We hope this project will be a centralized community hub that is focused on the importance of our local natural resources, reinforcing that humans are inherently connected to nature.

To provide this valuable input and take the survey visit: https://www.portagecounty-oh.gov/portage-park-district/things-do/webforms/park-education-center-survey



CALENDAR & ITEMS OF INTEREST

Supporting our local businesses and organizations is a key component of Sustainability! Check out the City's Culture & Community section of the website (www.kentohio.gov/culture-community/) for more details about the following:

- **Haymaker Farmers' Market**
  - Open year-round, every Saturday morning in Kent: Held **outdoors** in downtown Kent on Franklin Ave. from April through November, 9am to 1pm, and **indoors** at the United Methodist Church (1435 E. Main St., Kent in the UMC Pierson Hall) from December through March, 10am to 1pm. Visit www.haymakermarket.com for full details.

- **Main Street Kent**
  - A non-profit organization that focuses on the promotion, beautification, and revitalization of downtown Kent. The City of Kent, Kent State University, local businesses, and community members support Main Street Kent. Check out their full calendar of events here: www.mainstreetkent.org/events/full-calendar/ .

- **Kent In Good Company Podcast**
  - Hosted by Kent resident and small business owner, Katy Thomas, head to the Main Street Kent website at the following link to listen and learn more about Kent's local businesses: https://mainstreetkent.org/discover/in-good-company/ .

- **The Kent Area Chamber of Commerce**
  - Visit www.kentbiz.com/events/eventcalendar for a full listing of Chamber and Community events.

- **Kent Historical Society & Museum**
  - Learn more about our community at Kent's primary history resource and reference center! Visit www.kentohiohistory.org for organization details and events.

- **Kent Parks and Recreation**
  - Offers a variety of locations, programs, and events for individuals and families to enjoy. They provide quality recreation and entertainment for the community through parks, sports, fitness, education and cultural arts. Visit their full program and event offerings at: www.kentohio.gov/culture-community/kent-parks-and-recreation/

- **Portage Parks Free Events**
  - For a full list of events and information visit: https://www.portagecounty-oh.gov/portage-park-district

- **Sun in Leo's Clothing Swap – Rainbow Weekend Special 10/16/26 through 10/18/26**
  - Join us for a Gender Affirming clothing swap for free clothes to everyone all weekend at the Sun in Leo store located in Acorn Alley, downtown Kent. For more information visit: https://mainstreetkent.org/rainbow-weekend/

- **Kent Free Library's Fall Family Fest – 10/24/26**
  - Join us any time between 2 and 3:30 PM to decorate a pumpkin cookie, make a paper bag scarecrow, snap a family selfie in front of our fall backdrop, and more. Families with children of all ages visit the webpage for full details and to register for this free event.

- **City-wide Trick or Treat – 10/25/26**
  - The City-wide neighborhood Trick or Treat is scheduled for Sunday, October 25th, 2026 from 4pm-6pm. Get your costumes and candy ready! Have fun and be safe.

- **ESDRI Forum: Sustainability in Community – 10/26/26**
  - 6:15 - 8 PM, Reception 8 - 9 PM
    Kiva Auditorium at the Kent State University Student Center
    Join the Environmental Science and Design Research Institute at Kent State University for a forum discussion with three experts whose work shapes sustainability and engagement in Northeast Ohio communities. Julie Morris, Sustainability Coordinator for the City of Kent, Deepa Vedavyas, Director of Resiliency and Sustainability at Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC), and Greg Peckham, President & CEO for the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park will speak on their career pathways and current work and join in a conversation moderated by Kent State

University professor Jennifer Mapes, Ph.D. This event will showcase how cities can collaborate to achieve their sustainability goals, how collective action can secure environmentally friendly and affordable resources, and how partnerships among governments, nonprofits, businesses, and residents can support thriving communities and resilient landscapes. Supported by the Kent State Healthy Communities Research Institute and Community Engaged Research Institute. This event is FREE, but registration is encouraged - Please RSVP here.

- **Family Friendly Halloween in Downtown Kent – 10/30/26**
    - Head to downtown Kent from 5pm-7pm with the kids for some trick-or-treating and family-friendly fun! Several businesses and organizations will be set up at the Hometown Bank Plaza, plus dozens of others will be handing out treats from their storefronts. Visit the website for full details.

      Stop for some dinner before, during or after this spooktacular event! Find a great local spot at: https://mainstreetkent.org/eat-drink-shop/eat-drink/

- **Pre-Holiday Sip & Shop – 11/14/26**
    - Skip the holiday hustle and enjoy a more relaxed way to shop local at Main Street Kent's Pre-Holiday Sip & Shop in downtown Kent from 11am to 4pm! Start your day at Bella Vita Wellness Company in Acorn Alley (154 E. Main St., Suite E) to check in and pick up your free Sip & Shop tote and shopping pass—available to the first 100 guests. Then, sip and shop your way through downtown Kent, where participating businesses will offer special discounts just for Sip & Shop guests. At most participating businesses, make a purchase during the event and receive a free holiday ornament to take home.
      Participating businesses include Bell Tower Brewing, Bella Vita Wellness Company, Board and Bevy, Branded in Kent, Daisy Pops, Flourish Plant Mkt., Gigi's Ristorante & Market, Hippie Fox Rocks, Keys by Keleigh, Laziza Craft Kitchen, Leaf Home & Blooms, Off the Wagon, Silver and Scents, Squirrel City Jewelers and Sun in Leo.Come early, grab your tote, enjoy a drink and find something special while supporting downtown Kent businesses—all before the holiday rush begins! Full details at: Pre-Holiday Sip & Shop

- **The Kent Flea – Holiday Markets 11/14/26 & 12/12/26**
    - Come visit the Kent Flea & Makers Market located at the historic Marvin Kent Home at 409 W. Main Street in Kent. The last two markets of the season are Holiday Markets and will be held from 10am – 4pm on 11/14/26 and 12/12/26 respectively. Full market details available at: https://www.facebook.com/kentflea/

- **Festival of Lights and Small Business Saturday – 11/28/26**
    - Grab your coats, scarves, mittens, and cameras and enjoy the magic of the season with your family and friends at the Festival of Lights sponsored by Axess Family Services on Saturday, November 28, 2026 (Small Business Saturday) from 5:30pm-9pm, and presented by the Kent Area Chamber of Commerce. The event will be held in traditional fashion by the Main Street Bridge, Hometown Bank Plaza and gazebo at the corner of Main Street and Franklin Avenue in downtown Kent. Highlights include Santa and Mrs. Claus arriving by train, light-up of downtown Kent, horse drawn wagon rides, cookies and hot chocolate. Before and after enjoying the festivities, keep your holiday spirit going by supporting local at downtown Kent shops and restaurants (business hours will vary) to support them for Small Business Saturday. Limited road closures will be made for the safety of people attending the Festival of Lights. For more information, please contact the KACC office at 330.673.9855 or dcampbell@kentbiz.com.

- **Main Street Kent Cookie Walk – 12/6/26**
  - Save the date! Main Street Kent's Cookie Walk is scheduled for 12/6/26 from 10am – 5pm. Follow the webpage for more details as they become available.

- **Kent Community Timebank Orientation – 12/13/26**
  - JOIN THE KENT COMMUNITY TIMEBANK BY ATTENDING OUR QUICK ORIENTATION! Join one of the most active timebanks in the United States by attending the short orientation for the Kent Community Timebank! This meeting is all you need to do to become a member. You do not need to live in Kent to participate. You are invited! Current KCTB Members are also welcome to attend to refresh their understanding or to give an attestation to the value of the KCTB! You will earn timecredits for attending! Visit the website for full details and items to fill out before attending this free event.

- **Yard Waste Transfer Site - Open Through 12/19/26**
  - The yard waste transfer site hours are Tuesdays 9am-1pm, Wednesdays 5-8pm (through 10/28/26) and Saturdays 9am-noon. The site is a place for residents of Kent to drop off brush, clippings and other yard waste. It is also the place to get the grindings from the waste, to use like mulch, for free! Stop by near Cherry Street and Mogadore Rd, near the entrance to Plum Creek. The Yard Waste Site is closed during the winter months. It will remain open until December 19th, 2026, weather permitting. During winter weather prior to the anticipated winter closing date of December 19th, please call the Service Department at 330-678-8105 to verify that the site is open. Full details at: https://www.kentohio.gov/living-here/garbage-and-recycling/yard-waste/