

**THE 2011
PORTAGE COMMUNITY SURVEY**

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Introduction

The 2009 Portage Community Survey was the twenty-fourth consecutive annual citizen survey carried out by the Kercher Center for Social Research for the City of Portage. The 2011 survey is therefore the 25th Portage Community Survey. As in previous years, the 2011 survey attempts to measure citizens' viewpoints on city services and issues. The first survey, in 1986, was administered through the mail. After that, until 2008, all subsequent surveys utilized a random-digit-dialing telephone approach, as it was faster and generally produced a representative sample. In 2008, the City Council decided to return to a mail approach. Since it proved to be successful, a mail approach was also used for the 2009 survey and for the current survey.

As before, the survey instrument was initially drafted by the staff of the City. It was reviewed by a Council committee, the Council, and the KCSR, and ultimately approved by the Council. Most of the survey items were adapted from previous versions of the instrument in order to permit comparisons over time. Some additional items were also included to address citizens' attitudes toward current issues facing the city.

The 2011 survey instrument was reviewed over the summer, and the data collection process began on September 9th with a letter, on City letterhead over the signature of the mayor, to each of the 1992 people in the sample. That letter told them of the nature of the survey and requested their participation. A week later, on September 16th, the survey packets were put in the mail. Each packet contained a cover letter, again on City letterhead and over the mayor's signature, reminding the respondent of the purpose and importance of the survey, plus the survey instrument itself, and a postage paid envelope for return to the Kercher Center at WMU.

Coding of the data began on September 21, shortly after the first responses were received at the KCSR, and continued through October 24. A total of 906 completed surveys were received by the cut-off date. In addition to the 906 completions, 38 mailings were returned to the City or the KCSR due to bad addresses, 27 surveys were returned after the cut-off, and 4 blank surveys were returned to the KCSR. This produces a response rate of 47.1 percent. As was the case in both 2009 (with a response rate of 42.5%) and 2008 (with a response rate of 46.5%), this rate is clearly higher than it was with random digit dialing (36.6% in 2007 and 31.4% in 2006). This factor definitely adds confidence in the results. Moreover, response distributions on demographic and substantive indicators have been highly stable from year to year. It was anticipated that this year's survey would be equally stable, even though two years have passed since the previous survey.

With a 2010 Census count of more than 46,000 for the City of Portage, a random sample of 906 respondents is more than sufficient to represent the adult population of the City with the required 95% level of confidence and sampling error of plus or minus 5 percent. Frequency distributions have been run for each item on the survey. **Appendix A** contains a copy of the survey instrument with the frequency and percentage distributions for each item. In addition, the responses to open-ended items were sorted by question number, then alphabetized and edited for readability. **Appendix B** contains the responses to the open-ended items.

Results

Characteristics of the Sample

In survey research, it is necessary to collect demographic information about the sample of respondents in order to determine if the sample is indeed representative of the larger population of interest. This year, it was anticipated that the sample would be similar to the 2009 sample, as well as to the target population, given that the data collection approach is the same as 2009. The names and addresses were randomly drawn by a sampling company, and the response rate is high, suggesting that the mail approach again worked well.

Although minor variations in the distribution of demographic characteristics invariably occur from year to year, these variations are generally within the confidence bands associated with samples collected using these kinds of systematic approaches. Table 1 presents the results concerning the number of years lived in Portage, the type of residence, and the area of the city where respondents live. When comparing the number of years lived in Portage for 2011 and 2009, there are some fluctuations in the indicators, with smaller proportions that have lived in Portage less than five years, and larger proportions more than ten years. As in past years, it is still true that the vast majority of survey respondents lived in their own homes and for more than ten years. However, the trend of continued growth in the proportion of respondents reporting ten or more years is noteworthy. The proportions from each area of the city remained fairly stable. The largest concentration of respondents continues to come from the northwest quadrant of Portage. In 2011, there were small decreases from 2009 in the numbers of respondents from the northeast and southwest areas of the city and small increases in the numbers from the northwest and southeast quadrants.

Table 1. Residential Characteristics of the Sample: 2011, 2009, 2008

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
	%	%	%
<u>Years Lived in Portage</u>			
Less Than 5 Years	7.9	12.1	11.1
5 Thru 9 Years	12.1	12.8	15.7
10 or More Years	80.0	75.1	73.1
<u>Type of Residence</u>			
Single Family	84.9	82.9	85.9
Apt/Condo/Mobile/Other	15.1	17.1	14.1
<u>Area of City</u>			
Northwest	48.9	46.6	47.0
Northeast	9.5	10.9	11.4
Southwest	14.4	16.0	14.7
Southeast	27.3	26.5	26.8

In a parallel fashion, Table 2 below shows the age, education, family income, and gender distributions for the 2011, 2009, and 2008 surveys. Just over half (52.9%) of the respondents have a college or graduate degree. As would be expected given the results for number of years lived in Portage, the proportion of respondents over the age of 60 is higher than 2009 and 2008. This is accompanied by small declines in the proportions under 40 and 40 thru 59. The vast majority of respondents (90.0%) stated they were 40 years of age or older, up slightly from the 2009 total of 88.0 percent, but also substantially higher than previous years (79.1% in 2007, 74.8% in 2006). The gender makeup of this sample, with 54.8 percent male and 45.2 percent female, is similar to 2009, but continues to be considerably different from that of previous years. Overall, the 2011 survey participants continue to be middle-aged or older, highly educated, and relatively affluent. Indeed, the percent of respondents having a family income of under \$25,000 remained small and stable, and the proportion with incomes over \$100,000 increased somewhat to 24.2 percent, up from 20.6 percent in 2009.

Table 2. Respondent Personal Characteristics: 2011, 2009, 2008

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
	%	%	%
<u>Age</u>			
Less Than 40 Years	10.0	12.0	13.9
40 Thru 59 Years	37.2	38.3	39.5
60 or More Years	52.8	49.7	46.6
<u>Education</u>			
High School or Less	15.7	13.6	16.9
Some College/Technical	31.5	33.5	32.1
College Degree	52.8	52.9	51.0
<u>Family Income</u>			
Less Than \$25,000	12.2	12.1	12.8
\$25,000 Thru \$99,999	63.6	67.2	63.1
\$100,000 or more	24.2	20.6	24.2
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	54.8	52.5	52.0
Female	45.2	47.5	48.0

The vast majority of Portage residents who responded to this survey identified themselves as White/non-Hispanic (94.6% this year, 94.4% in 2009, 96.3% in 2008). Only 1.8 percent identified themselves as Black or African American (1.4% in 2009, 0.7% in 2008), and 0.3 percent as “multiracial” (0.9% in 2009). Only one respondent (0.1%) self-identified as Native American, another nine (1.0%) identified themselves as Asian-American, and three (0.3%) indicated they were Hispanic. These numbers and proportions are all comparable to data from 2009 and previous years.

This year, 87.1 percent of the respondents reported that they have Internet access at home. This again represents a small increase in the percentage of residents reporting such access (up from 84.2% in 2009, 83.3% in 2008 and 78.7% in 2007). This even holds for the respondents over 60, since the proportion of those respondents reporting that they do not have access to the internet from home has continued to drop (21.1% this year, 25.8% in 2009, and 26.7% in 2008). The respondents were also asked what type of internet service they receive. More than half (54.3%) get it from cable (up from 46.2% in 2009), another quarter have DSL (24.4%), and 6.1 percent have either satellite service or other high speed provider. The few that remain (2.2%), only have dial-up access. These results suggest that high speed access to the internet is on the verge of being universal in Portage.

Related to the decision to shift to a mail survey approach, the respondents were again asked what kind of telephone service they have at home. This year, 83.7 percent indicated that they have both a traditional land line and one or more cell phones (83.5% in 2009). Only 4.2 percent reported that they only have cell phone service, and 12.1 percent indicated that they only have land line service.

Citizen Perceptions of Problems

In this part of the survey instrument, the respondents were asked if they felt particular issues were problems in Portage, and if so, whether they perceived the problems to be “slight,” “moderate,” or “severe” (see **Appendix A**, Questions 6, 9, 10, 18, 19, 28, and 30). For each item, point values were assigned to each of the categories (1 for “no problem,” 2 for “slight problem,” 3 for “moderate problem,” and 4 for “severe problem”). The number of respondents who selected the category was multiplied by the appropriate point value, the products were then totaled, and divided by the number of respondents. This procedure results in a weighted mean score. In Table 3 below, issues are organized from the most problematic at the top, to the least problematic at the bottom. The rankings are based on the mean scores, which are displayed in parentheses -- the higher the mean score, the more problematic the issue. Also, the percentages in the table include all responses in the “slight” “moderate” and “severe” categories.

Table 3. Perceived Problems in Portage: 2011, 2009, 2008

Issue	<u>2011</u>		<u>2009</u>		<u>2008</u>	
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
Traffic-Westnedge	1 (1.99)	67.6	1 (2.20)	73.6	1 (2.18)	71.9
Home/Yard Conditions	2 (1.64)	48.0	2 (1.58)	44.5	2 (1.59)	45.4
Drinking Water Quality	3 (1.55)	34.2	3 (1.44)	27.5	4 (1.45)	27.9
Substance Abuse	4 (1.32)	22.8	4 (1.38)	24.7	3 (1.57)	37.5
Underage Drinking	5 (1.22)	16.7	5 (1.30)	22.3	n/a	
Police Protection	6 (1.18)	13.3	6 (1.24)	17.8	5 (1.25)	18.5
Fire Protection	7 (1.06)	4.1	7 (1.07)	4.9	6 (1.07)	4.7

The obvious result from Table 3 is that the rankings of the 2011 mean scores are identical to the rankings for the mean scores for 2009 and are only marginally different from those for 2008. The top four (i.e., most problematic) remain at the top, and Police and Fire (i.e., least problematic) remain at the bottom. Moreover, this year, most of the issues decreased somewhat, while only two (Home/Yard Conditions, Drinking Water Quality) increased marginally. Other than the item on Underage Drinking, which was added in 2009, and which shows relatively low levels of concern, the noteworthy changes have to do with Traffic on Westnedge and Drinking Water Quality. Rather surprisingly, while concern for Traffic on Westnedge remains high, it has declined somewhat in the past two years. In contrast, concern for Drinking Water Quality has increased. An item in the 2009 survey dealing with the condition of pavement on the City's streets and roads was deleted from this year's instrument (although related information appears below with respect to the respondents' satisfaction with City services).

Turning to the respondent's perceptions of the severity of city problems (see Table 4 below), the proportions of respondents reporting issues as severe problems continue to be small. Concern over the quality of the drinking water continues to be a consistent concern (90.3% of the respondents either indicated that they have city water or did not respond). Those who did think there was a severe problem with the water were asked the nature of the problem. Those responses are in **Appendix B** - Question 6. However, the proportion of respondents (6.0%) who consider the problem of Drinking Water Quality to be severe is up only slightly from 5.7% in 2009, and 4.8% in 2008 (well within the margin of error), and it is now in the top of the ranking. Moreover, the fact that it is at the top appears to be largely due to the substantial drop in the proportion that identify Traffic on Westnedge as severe. That is down by more than half from the 2009 and 2008 levels to 5.0%, putting it in second place for the first time. Nevertheless, the perceptions of traffic problems on Westnedge as well as elsewhere in Portage appear to be a concern (see Question 31 in **Appendix A** and in **Appendix B**). A total of 42.5 percent of the respondents in 2011 indicated that traffic flow was also a problem in other places in the city, up from 36.4 percent in 2009. Centre, Milham, Oakland, and Portage were most frequently identified by those respondents.

Table 4. Percent Rating as Severe Problem in Portage: 2011, 2009, 2008

Issue	<u>2011</u>		<u>2009</u>		<u>2008</u>	
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
Drinking Water Quality	1	6.0	2	5.7	3	4.8
Traffic - Westnedge	2	5.0	1	10.6	1	10.8
Home/Yard Conditions	3	4.0	3	3.3	4	3.3
Substance Abuse	4	1.3	4	2.9	2	5.3
Police Protection	5	0.7	6	0.9	5	1.4
Underage Drinking	6	0.6	5	1.0	n/a	
Fire Protection	7	0.4	7	0.7	6	0.6

¹ Issues in Table 4 are organized from most problematic at the top, to least problematic at the bottom (for the current year).

Although the condition of neighborhood homes and yards was not perceived to be a severe problem by very many people, it is interesting to note that a slightly larger proportion of respondents feel that the situation is severe in 2011 than was the case in 2009 and 2008. In 2009, two questions specifically asked about the condition of neighborhoods - the respondents own neighborhood and other neighborhoods in the city. This year, the question about other neighborhoods was deleted from the instrument. For their own neighborhoods, though, nearly three quarters of the 2011 respondents indicated that the situation is about the same as it was five years ago (72.8%). This is almost the same as it was in 2009 (73.0%). However, 17.2 percent of the respondents do feel that their own neighborhoods have declined, which again is almost the same as in 2009 (16.2%). Both of these proportions are also close to the results from 2008. The remaining items received less than 2 percent responses.

Citizen Satisfaction with Services and Programs

This section focuses on the level of satisfaction that Portage residents have expressed with regard to selected city services and programs (see **Appendix A**, Questions 1-4, 8, and 11-17). In Table 5 - on the next page - rank was again calculated using mean responses. For each item, point values were assigned to each of the five categories (1 for "very satisfied," 2 for "somewhat satisfied," 3 for "neutral," 4 for "somewhat dissatisfied," and 5 for "very dissatisfied"). The number of respondents who selected the category was again multiplied by the appropriate value, the five products were then totaled and divided by the number of respondents to produce the weighted mean for that item. The lower the mean score, the higher the level of satisfaction.

The first observation about these items is the fact that in most instances a substantial number of respondents had not participated in the program or used the service. This was true especially for the Senior Center (77.7% not responding) and Recreation Programs (72.7% not responding). In addition, the items dealing with Bikeways/Trailways (32.6% not responding), and Brush Collection (25.3% not responding), were also definitely higher than desirable. Even the non-response rates for most of the remainder of the items were all in the range of about 20 percent. Such levels, especially those above 15 percent, do raise a concern about the generalizability of the results. Only two of the items, Snow Removal and the Condition of Pavement received acceptable rates of response.

Bikeways/Trailways retained the top ranking in 2011, edging out Curbside Recycling and Condition of Parks. However, as was the case in both 2009 and 2008, the top four remain the top four and the bottom five remain the bottom five, with only some minor reshuffling. The Spring Cleanup, Fall Leaf Pickup, and Brush Collection all remain in the middle of the ranking, again with only minor reshuffling in the rankings. As in 2009 and in previous years, respondent satisfaction with almost all city services and programs is high, so that even those services at or near the bottom - the Condition of Streets and Snow Removal - were well regarded by substantial majorities of the respondents.

Almost all of the services and programs experienced minor increases in satisfaction from 2009 to 2011. However, it should be noted that all of these changes are small in magnitude, and thus fall within the sampling error. Only two services experienced decreases in satisfaction scores in 2011 as compared to 2009 - Condition of Parks and Condition of Streets. The decline for Condition of Parks was also minor (only 1.5 percentage points). However, if the value is

compared to those of previous years, the Condition of Streets appears to have experienced a significant drop – more than 10 percentage points. Unfortunately, this is not clear. It could be an artifact of the wording, since in 2011, the word “neighborhood” was removed from the question. Although it does appear to have varied significantly from the 2009 and 2008 values, it is not possible to determine if that is actually due to changes in the attitudes of the respondents.

Table 5. Satisfaction with City Services and Programs: 2011, 2009, 2008¹

Service/Program	2011		2009		2008	
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
Bikeways/Trailways	1	(1.31) 95.1	1	(1.36) 93.5	2	(1.36) 94.9
Curbside Recycling	2	(1.31) 93.4	3	(1.39) 92.0	1	(1.33) 93.4
Condition of Parks	3	(1.39) 92.2	2	(1.38) 93.7	3	(1.39) 91.8
Spring Clean Up	4	(1.40) 92.8	4	(1.51) 89.8	4	(1.45) 92.0
Fall Leaf Pickup	5	(1.52) 90.9	5	(1.56) 90.1	6	(1.55) 89.4
Brush Collection	6	(1.63) 87.3	6	(1.69) 86.5	5	(1.51) 87.7
Recreation Programs	7	(1.63) 85.0	7	(1.75) 80.8	7	(1.72) 81.6
Snow Removal	8	(2.08) 76.3	9	(2.19) 73.5	8	(2.11) 74.9
Condition of Streets	9	(2.56) 61.7	8	(2.17) 71.8	9	(2.26) 71.1

¹ Issues in Table 5 are organized from the most satisfaction at the top, to the least satisfaction at the bottom for the current year. The ranking is based on the mean response for each issue, which is displayed in parentheses. The percentages who responded either “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” are also provided.

Another question of this same type asked if respondents had attended any of the programs offered at the Bandshell, Celery Flats, the Amphitheatre, or the Hayloft. Unfortunately, this item also had a high rate of non-response, (57.7%, 53.0% in 2009, and 49.3% in 2008). Moreover, the rates of non-response are climbing, and that suggests that the rates of attendance at such programs are falling. Still, of those who had attended, the 2011 results show that fully 88.8 percent were either “very” or “somewhat satisfied.”

As was the case in 2009 and previous years, a substantial proportion of the respondents in this year’s survey reported that they had direct contact with city employees during the past year (70.9% in 2011, 66.1% in 2009, and 67.5% in 2008). Moreover, of those respondents who did report such contact, 57.0 percent reported that they were “very satisfied” (virtually the same as 57.4% in 2009). Another 20.7 percent indicated they were “somewhat satisfied” with the quality of service they received, and this too about the same as it was in 2009. Those few (3.1% in 2011) that were “very dissatisfied” (3.2% in 2009 and 4.4% in 2008) were also asked why they were dissatisfied. These responses are in **Appendix B, Question 17.**

Only 22.3 percent of the respondents indicated that they had utilized services offered at the Portage Senior Center. This is up slightly from 2009 (21.8%) but similar to 2008 (22.2%). It is also interesting that among respondents 60 and older, only 35.5 percent reported that they had used the services of the Senior Center. Nevertheless, of those in the 2011 survey who have used

these services, 89.1 percent reported that they were either “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” (among respondents 60 and older this was 92.1%). This is in comparison to 83.1 percent in 2009 and 84.6 percent in 2008.

Sources of Information about the City

This year, in addition to items that asked respondents about their sources of information concerning City government, a second set of items was added concerning their preferred sources of information. In each case, the respondents were provided with a list of options and asked to choose all that they use. Since respondents could select multiple responses, the number of responses exceeds the number of cases. Therefore, proportions of both cases and responses are presented in order to explain the results. The figures in the Percent of Responses columns are the proportions of the total responses represented by each information source. The figures in the Percent of Cases columns are the proportions of the respondents that selected each information source. The results are reported below in Table 6.

Table 6. Information Sources about City Government

	Current		Preferred	
	Percent of Responses	Percent of Cases	Percent of Responses	Percent of Cases
City Website	8.2	20.5	7.8	17.1
<i>Portager</i> Newsletter	33.5	84.2	35.0	76.7
Public Media Network	5.2	12.9	4.5	9.8
Contact with City Employees	n/a	n/a	2.3	4.9
Kalamazoo/Portage <i>Gazette</i>	27.7	69.5	26.3	57.8
Local TV/Radio	23.0	57.8	21.8	47.8
Social Media	n/a	n/a	1.1	2.5
Other	1.7	4.2	1.0	2.2
None	0.8	2.0	0.3	0.7
Total	100.0%	251.2%	100.0%	219.4%

It is clear from the table that the *Portager*, the *Gazette*, and local TV/Radio are the major sources of information. Of all the options, those three were the only ones to receive over 10 percent of the responses, with the *Portager* topping them at 33.5 percent (for Current sources) and 35.0 percent (for Preferred sources). Moreover, when you look at the distribution of cases for both sets of items, it is clear that many respondents have multiple sources of information, and that more than three quarters of them selected the *Portager*, about 60 to 70 percent selected the *Gazette*, and about half selected local television and radio. With respect to the Current sources, the results are very similar to the results from 2009 (*Portager* - 35.7%, *Gazette* - 27.5%, TV/Radio - 20.5%). These results suggest that there has apparently been little change in the ways citizens get their information about the City.

The respondents were also asked how important *The Portager* and the City website are as sources of information about what is going on in Portage city government. Regarding *The Portager*, the results are virtually identical to those from 2009 and 2008, plus they are consistent with the results from Table 7. This year, nearly all of the respondents (93.4%) indicated it was either “very important” or “somewhat important,” and only 6.6 percent indicated that *The Portager* was “not important.” These results are comparable to those of the previous three years. The proportions indicating either “very important” or “somewhat important” were - 95.1% in 2009 and 93.7% in 2008.

With respect to the item regarding the importance of the City website as a source of information, a substantial proportion of the respondents were unable to respond (33.1%). However, this is a substantial drop from previous years (45.4% in 2009, 45.3% in 2008, and 48.6% in 2007). It does appear that as computers and the internet become more ubiquitous, the website is becoming more accessible. Moreover, as was the case in 2009 and 2008, those that were able to respond to the item were largely positive. This year, three quarters of the respondents (75.1%) indicated that it was “very important” or “somewhat important” and 24.9 percent indicated that it was “not important.” While still high, these results are somewhat lower than the two previous years. In 2009, the comparable results were 80.0 and 20.0 percent, and in 2008, they were 82.7 percent and 17.3 percent.

Culture and Environment

This year, since an item from the previous instrument relating to economic development was deleted, respondents were asked to evaluate the city’s efforts with respect to making cultural opportunities available (see question 5 – **Appendix A**). The respondents could indicate that the city was doing “Too Much,” “Just Enough,” or “Too Little.” Table 7 below displays the results for 2011, and, while the differences are small, a minor trend may be taking place. This year, 81.3 percent of the respondents felt the City was doing “just enough” for cultural opportunities (down slightly from 83.3% in 2009 and again from 85.0% in 2008). At the same time, 9.0 percent felt the City was doing “too much,” and 9.7 felt the City was doing or “too little.” Moreover, the proportions at both extremes are growing, while the proportion in the middle is declining.

Table 7. Ratings of City Efforts on Key Issues: 2011, 2009, 2008

	Too Much		Just Enough		Too Little	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Making Cultural Opportunities Available						
2011	9.0	68	81.3	614	9.7	73
2009	7.9	53	83.3	558	8.8	59
2008	6.9	49	85.0	608	8.1	58

With regard to issues related to the environment, this year’s survey shows that more than three quarters of the respondents (82.6%) indicated that they have participated in the weekly

Curbside Recycling Program. This is down from 85.6 percent in 2009, but up from 2008 (81.5%), but notably higher than previous years (73.9% in 2007 and 75.6% in 2006). In addition, almost three quarters (74.7%) indicated they had used the curbside brush collection (in comparison to 68.1% in 2009, 61.8% in 2008 and 54.0% in 2007). Along with the previously reported levels of satisfaction, these trends suggest continued growth in participation in the future. In contrast, with respect to household hazardous waste disposal, only 34.5 percent of the respondents reported that they had used the county hazardous waste center in the last year. This is virtually unchanged from 2009 (34.8%), and up only marginally from 31.9 percent in 2008.

Perceptions of Governmental Operations

One area of current interest relates to the citizens' perceptions of the ways that governmental operations take place in Portage. Several items focus on this issue. As before, an overwhelming majority (87.7%) felt they were getting good service for their tax dollars (85.1% in 2009, 85.4% in 2008). This year's result is slightly higher, but comparable to previous years. The responses of those who disagreed can be found in **Appendix B**, Question 27.

Several new items were added to this year's instrument to more fully examine the views of the citizenry, given the state of the economy in the nation. One item dealt with how the City should deal with the decision regarding the relationship between taxes and services. Asked if the City were faced with the decision to raise taxes or further reduce services, 21.6 percent of the respondents indicated that they didn't know or simply did not respond. Of the remainder, 46.5 percent indicated that the City should maintain services and raise taxes, while 53.5 percent felt the opposite, that the City should maintain taxes and reduce services. While the latter group is larger by 7 percentage points, the sizeable non-response rate makes it too close to call.

Moreover, the responses to the next item on the instrument, which asks the respondents to list the services that should be reduced if it should become necessary, are distinctly mixed (see **Appendix B** – Question 21). While some respondents specifically identify the parks, cultural programs, brush collection, and other services, others focus on police, fire, and job cuts, while still others press for no service cuts at all.

The last item dealing with this general issue asked the respondents about intergovernmental cooperation. The vast majority of respondents (84.4%) selected the response, "If it saves Portage money and results in improved service." A few (6.4%) focused on saving money at the cost of reduced service, and a similar proportion (7.6%) indicated that none of the choices were acceptable. The two remaining response choices, both of which called for increased costs (with either improved or reduced service), only received 1.3 percent and 0.3 percent choices, respectively.

Prospects and Problems

In addition to the item asking about services to be reduced (noted above), two other major open-ended questions were included in this year's survey instrument, as they have been in the past. The first asked for the best two features of Portage, and the second asked for the most important single problem facing the City. All of the responses to these two questions are in **Appendix B**, Questions 32 and 33. In addition, because it was a mail survey, space was

provided for respondents to offer any comments, concerns or suggestion to the city. These are also found in **Appendix B**, as Question 44 – Final Comments.

It is clear from this year's responses to the open-ended questions that several familiar themes once again appear. For the positive features of Portage, many of the respondents identified the schools, various city services (pickups, recycling, the Senior Center – and, erroneously, the Library), the parks and the bikeways and trailways. A number noted the variety of services and shopping alternatives that are available. They also focused on other elements of the urban environment such the cleanliness of the city and its appearance, and generally that it is a nice place to live and to raise a family.

With respect to the problems, one of the dominant themes was the expected concern about jobs and economic development. Clearly related to this were the issues of taxes and the ability of the city to continue to provide quality services. Given the national economic context, this is not surprising. Other concerns include traffic, housing, and drugs.

As they frequently do, the final comments contain an array of concerns, opinions, and personal complaints, along with some interesting suggestions. All direct references to persons by name were eliminated during the editing. There is the usual confusion between taxes for the City, the District Library, and the School District, and frequently citizens do not realize how limited the City is with respect to its influence on specific business decisions. Nevertheless, some do echo the above themes. Similarly, many others are idiosyncratic and thus do not offer much in the way of useful policy information (although once again, some do offer specific actions that could be taken with apparently little cost involved). This is to be expected, since it happens in virtually all surveys of this kind. Still, there are a couple of themes that appear to follow up on earlier themes. Certain city services (e.g., snow removal, pickups, recycling) were often singled out for attention, usually negative. Although the bulk of the respondents are quite satisfied with the services provided by the city, many of these targeted suggestions lend salience to the perceptions of some citizens. Similarly, specific suggestions were often made regarding the city's roads and streets and intersections. These tend to reinforce the earlier information regarding traffic flow and the condition of roads and streets within the city.

A final note of caution is once again warranted with regard to the open-ended responses. First, it is quite common for people to take such opportunities to simply “vent” about a particular issue or matter that is of particular concern to them. This is frequently the origin of the idiosyncratic comments. More importantly, however, the bulk of open-ended responses tend to be at the extremes of opinion – either positive or negative. Relatively few are “middle of the road” in character. Therefore, responses to open-ended questions are seldom representative of the attitudes or opinions of the majority of people. Consequently, while they can be useful as examples or for specific public relations efforts, they should be treated with great caution in the process of making decisions about policy.

Appendix A

Research Instrument with Frequency and Percentage Distributions

2011 PORTAGE COMMUNITY SURVEY

Please check the box next to the answer that best represents your opinion or experience. Skip any question you do not want to answer. There is space at the end for comments.

CULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

1. How satisfied are you with the condition of city parks?

542	71.2%	Very satisfied
160	21.0	Somewhat satisfied
47	6.2	Neutral
9	1.2	Somewhat dissatisfied
3	0.4	Very dissatisfied
[145	16.0%]	Have not visited/Don't know

2. If you have participated in any of the recreation programs offered by the city (such as softball leagues, the Summer Fun Center, Summer Drama Camps, Ramona Park Beach, etc.), how satisfied are you with them?

132	53.4%	Very satisfied
78	31.6	Somewhat satisfied
33	13.4	Neutral
4	1.6	Somewhat dissatisfied
0	0.0	Very dissatisfied
[659	72.7%]	Have not participated/Don't know

3. If you have attended any of the programs offered at the Bandshell, Celery Flats Historical Area, Amphitheatre, or the Hayloft Theater, how satisfied were you with the programs?

236	61.6%	Very satisfied
104	27.2	Somewhat satisfied
34	8.9	Neutral
7	1.8	Somewhat dissatisfied
2	0.5	Very dissatisfied
[523	57.7%]	Have not attended/Don't know

4. If you have used any of the city bikeways or trailways within the last year, how satisfied are you with the condition of these facilities?

468	76.6%	Very satisfied
113	18.5	Somewhat satisfied
18	2.9	Neutral
9	1.5	Somewhat dissatisfied
3	0.5	Very dissatisfied
[295	32.6%]	Have not used/Don't know

5. Do you feel that the city is doing too much, just enough or too little in making cultural opportunities available in Portage?

68	9.0%	Too much
614	81.3	Just enough
73	9.7	Too little
[151	16.7%]	Don't know

6. If you have city water, is there a problem with the quality of the drinking water?

538	65.8%	No, it is not a problem
161	19.7	Yes, slight problem
70	8.6	Yes, moderate problem
49	6.0	Yes, severe problem (Please specify what) See Appendix B
[88	9.7%]	Don't have city water/Don't know

7. Have you utilized the Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste Center in the last year?

303	34.5%	Yes
574	65.5	No
[29	3.2%]	Don't know

HUMAN SERVICES

8. If you have utilized the services offered at the Portage Senior Center, how satisfied are you with those services?

135	66.8%	Very satisfied
45	22.3	Somewhat satisfied
21	10.4	Neutral
1	0.5	Somewhat dissatisfied
0	0.0	Very dissatisfied
[704	77.7%]	Have not used/Don't know

9. Is there a problem with illegal drug use in your neighborhood?

414	77.2%	No, it is not a problem
78	14.6	Yes, slight problem
37	6.9	Yes, moderate problem
7	1.3	Yes, severe problem
[370	40.8%]	Don't know

10. Is there a problem with underage drinking in your neighborhood?

438	83.3%	No, it is not a problem
62	11.8	Yes, slight problem
23	4.4	Yes, moderate problem
3	0.6	Yes, severe problem
[329	40.5%]	Don't know

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

11. If you have utilized the Fall Leaf Pickup Program in the last year, how satisfied are you with the program?

484	65.5%	Very satisfied
188	25.4	Somewhat satisfied
19	2.6	Neutral
36	4.9	Somewhat dissatisfied
12	1.6	Very dissatisfied
[167	18.4%]	Have not participated/Don't know

12. If you have utilized the Spring Cleanup Program in the last year, how satisfied are you with the program?

534	72.5%	Very satisfied
150	20.4	Somewhat satisfied
27	3.7	Neutral
14	1.9	Somewhat dissatisfied
12	1.6	Very dissatisfied
[169	18.7%]	Have not participated/Don't know

13. If you have utilized the weekly Portage Curbside Recycling Program in the last year, how satisfied are you with the program?

590	78.9%	Very satisfied
109	14.6	Somewhat satisfied
27	3.6	Neutral
16	2.1	Somewhat dissatisfied
6	0.8	Very dissatisfied
[158	17.4%]	Have not participated/Don't know

14. If you have utilized the Curbside Brush Collection Program, how satisfied are you with the program?

407	60.1%	Very satisfied
184	27.2	Somewhat satisfied
33	4.9	Neutral
36	5.3	Somewhat dissatisfied
17	2.5	Very dissatisfied
[229	25.3%]	Have not used/Don't know

15. How satisfied are you with the street snow removal?

329	37.9%	Very satisfied
334	38.4	Somewhat satisfied
63	7.2	Neutral
93	10.7	Somewhat dissatisfied
50	5.8	Very dissatisfied
[37	4.1%]	Don't know

16. How satisfied are you with the condition of the pavement on roads and streets in Portage?

158	17.6%	Very satisfied
395	44.1	Somewhat satisfied
86	9.6	Neutral
194	21.7	Somewhat dissatisfied
63	7.0	Very dissatisfied
[10	1.1%]	Don't know

17. If you have had any direct contact with Portage city employees over the past year, how satisfied were you with the quality of service received from the employee?

366	57.0%	Very satisfied	
133	20.7	Somewhat satisfied	
87	13.6	Neutral	
36	5.6	Somewhat dissatisfied	
20	3.1	Very dissatisfied (Please specify why)	See Appendix B
[264	29.1%]	Have had no contact/Don't know	

18. Do you think there is a problem with the level of police protection in Portage?

633	86.7%	No, it is not a problem
69	9.5	Yes, slight problem
23	3.2	Yes, moderate problem
5	0.7	Yes, severe problem
[176	19.4%]	Don't know

19. Do you think there is a problem with the level of fire protection in Portage?

683	95.9%	No, it is not a problem
17	2.4	Yes, slight problem
9	1.3	Yes, moderate problem
3	0.4	Yes, severe problem
[194	21.4%]	Don't know

20. Due to the state of the economy, the city may need to increase taxes or further reduce services. If it becomes necessary, would you rather the city ...

330	46.5%	maintain services and raise taxes?
380	53.5	maintain taxes and further reduce services?
[196	21.6%]	Don't know

21. If city services must be reduced, which service(s) would you suggest?

See Appendix B

22. Under which of the following conditions would you support intergovernmental cooperation and/or consolidated services?

646	84.4%	If it saves Portage money and results in improved service
49	6.4	If it saves Portage money and reduces service
10	1.3	If it costs Portage more money and results in improved service
2	0.3	If it costs Portage more money and reduces service
58	7.6	None of the above
[141	15.6%]	Don't know

23. How do you *currently* obtain information about what is going on in Portage city government? (Check all that apply)

184	20.3%	City website	
754	83.2	<i>Portager</i> newsletter	
116	12.8	Public Media Network (AT&T U-verse or Charter Cable)	
623	68.8	<i>Kalamazoo Gazette/Portage Gazette</i>	
518	57.2	Local television and/or radio	
38	4.2	Other (please specify)	See Appendix B
18	2.0	None of the above	

24. What is your preferred method of obtaining information about what is going on in Portage city government? (Check all that apply)

152	16.8%	City website	
683	75.4	Portager newsletter	
87	9.6	Public Media Network (AT&T U-verse or Charter Cable)	
44	4.9	Contact with city employees	
514	56.7	Kalamazoo Gazette/Portage Gazette	
425	46.9	Local television and/or radio	
22	2.4	Social media (e.g., NIXLE, Facebook, Twitter)	
20	2.2	Other (please specify)	See Appendix B
6	0.7	None of the above	

25. As a source of information about what is going on in Portage city government, how important is the Portager newsletter?

485	56.3%	Very important
320	37.1	Somewhat important
57	6.6	Not important
[44	4.9%]	Don't know

26. As a source of information about what is going on in Portage city government, how important is the City of Portage website?

179	29.5%	Very important
276	45.5	Somewhat important
151	24.9	Not important
[300	33.1%]	Don't know

27. Do you think you are getting good services for your city tax dollars?

690	87.7%	Yes	
97	12.3	No (Please specify why not)	See Appendix B
[119	13.1%]	Don't know	

NEIGHBORHOODS

28. Is there a problem with the condition of neighborhood homes and yards in Portage?

437	52.0%	No, it is not a problem	
303	36.0	Yes, slight problem	
67	8.0	Yes, moderate problem	
34	4.0	Yes, severe problem (Please specify what)	See Appendix B
[65	7.2%]	Don't know	

29. Has the condition of your neighborhood changed in the last five years?

86	10.0%	It is better than it was
623	72.8	It is about the same
147	17.2	It is worse than it was
[50	5.5%]	Don't know

TRANSPORTATION

30. Is there a problem with the flow of traffic on South Westnedge Avenue?

280	32.4%	No, it is not a problem
357	41.3	Yes, slight problem
185	21.4	Yes, moderate problem
43	5.0	Yes, severe problem
[41	4.5%]	Don't know

31. Is there a problem with the flow of traffic on any Portage streets other than South Westnedge Avenue?

309	42.5%	Yes (Please specify streets)	See Appendix B
418	57.5	No	
[179	19.8]	Don't know	

GENERAL OPINION

32. In general, what do you feel are the best two features of Portage?

See Appendix B

33. Looking at the next ten years, what do you think is the single most important problem facing Portage?

See Appendix B

DEMOGRAPHICS

34. About how many years have you lived in Portage?

2	0.2%	Less than 1 year
68	7.6	1 to 4 years
108	12.1	5 to 9 years
712	80.0	10 or more years
[16	1.8%]	Don't know

35. Are you male or female?

477	54.8%	Male
394	45.2	Female
[35	3.9%]	No response

36. What is your age, please? Are you...

9	1.0%	29 years or younger
79	9.0	30-39
138	15.7	40-49
82	9.3	50-54
108	12.3	55-59
465	52.8	60 years or over
[25	2.8%]	Don't know

37. How would you classify your racial or ethnic heritage?

822	94.6%	White/non-Hispanic
16	1.8	Black/African American
1	0.1	Alaskan Native, American Indian, Eskimo
9	1.0	Asian American or Pacific Islander
3	0.3	Hispanic
1	0.1	International/non-US resident
3	0.3	Multiracial
14	1.6	Other (please specify)
[37	4.1%]	Don't know

See Appendix B

38. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

138	15.7%	High school or less
276	31.5	Some college/technical school
233	26.6	Bachelor's degree
230	26.2	Graduate degree
[29	3.2%]	Don't know

39. Which of the following best describes where you live?

752	84.9%	Single-family home
15	1.7	Mobile home
44	5.0	Apartment
62	7.0	Condominium
13	1.5	Other (please specify)
[20	2.2%]	Don't know

See Appendix B

40. Using Centre Avenue and South Westnedge Avenue as dividing streets, do you live in the northwest, northeast, southwest, or southeast portion of Portage?

429	48.9%	Northwest (Near Crossroads Mall)
83	9.5	Northeast (Near the airport)
126	14.4	Southwest (Near the state game area)
239	27.3	Southeast (Near the lakes)
[29	3.2%]	Don't know

41. Which of the following categories represents your total family income for the last year before taxes?

98	12.2%	Less than \$25,000
203	25.2	\$25,000 to \$49,999
173	21.5	\$50,000 to \$74,999
136	16.9	\$75,000 to \$99,999
195	24.2	\$100,000 or more
[101	11.1%]	Don't know

42. If you have access to the Internet from home, what type of internet service to you have?

110	12.9%	No internet service	
19	2.2	Dial-up	
208	24.4	DSL	
16	1.9	Satellite	
462	54.3	Cable	
36	4.2	Other (Please specify)	See Appendix B
[55	6.1%]	Don't know	

43. Do you have conventional land line telephone service or cell phone service in your home?

107	12.1%	Land line only
740	83.7	Both land line and cell phone
37	4.2	Cell phone only
[22	2.4%]	Don't know

44. Please indicate below any other comments, concerns, or suggestions you may have for the City of Portage.

See Appendix B

That was the last question! Thank you for your time and cooperation. Just put the survey in the postage-paid return envelope and drop it in the mail.

Appendix B

2011 Portage Community Survey Responses to Open-ended Questions

6. If you have city water, is there a problem with the quality of the drinking water? [Yes, severe problem - specify]

A lot of residue in water. Rust stains. Water is hard

Become ill soon after drinking

Before flushing hydrants, yellow water.

Brown water at times from faucets

Can't drink it. We have a 5 gal jug home every five days.

Can't drink this without filtering

Chlorine taste occasionally

Cloudy, rusty, hard with a lot of minerals, unappealing.

Cold water comes in brown at times, must then run to clear

Cost increased 15%

Cost of water.

Costs too much!

Costs too much!

Dirt

Discolored water sometimes

Far too hard.

“Floaters” in water, no obvious solution beyond an expensive filtration system – have inexpensive filter system and water softener but those are not effective

From June to Sept 2011, water was rusty for long periods and was not drinkable.

Hard

Hard water

Hard water

Hard water.

Hardness

High in rust, hard minerals.

Highly odorous

I believe the city adds fluoride to the water. This is a neurotoxin and does little or nothing for your teeth.

I don't feel anyone checks for compounds in the water and chlorine is a nerve inhibitor

I don't like the taste

I have a water softener and drinking filtration system. Otherwise, I would have water stains in sinks and toilets

I just don't like the taste or cost of city water.

I see "floaties" in the water

I see white sediment

It is my problem because I am allergic to bleach, but I can cut down on bought water because it's better now.

I wish it were not so expensive to hook up to the city water.

Iron

Iron

Iron

Iron

It runs dirty some times.

It's leaving residue on plates, bowls, faucets

It's very seldom clear water, always yellow.

Leaves brown stains in sink where water drips.

Leaves calcified deposits on refrigerator drip tray and coffee carafe.

Lime build up on dishes and dishwasher.

Lime, rust - have to have purifier and softener.

Lot's of lime in the water which cakes everything showers, plumbing, etc.

Lots of time we get rusty water!

My drinking glasses are always cloudy, after washing in the dishwasher.

My wife won't drink it. She says allowable limits of contaminants too high .

Occasionally rust colored.

Odor.

Often I fill the bathtub for my toddler and the water is brown - disgusting.

On end of line, get dirt, iron in my water. Need flushing

Orange color.

Poor to no water pressure too often

Pressure

Ruining my dishwasher, hard water

Rust

Rust

Rust – more so in recent years – hard to control in swimming pool, toilets, laundry

Rusty

Sediment in the water.

Since Milham construction – stains in toilets quite evident, need weekly cleaning (did not prior to construction and water flushing). Also more of an odor

Smell at times

Smell, brown part of the time. New water treatment facility doesn't seem to work well

Smell.

Smells most of the time

Smells. Use a softener, but water leaves dark marks in toilets if not washed out daily.

Sometimes has a smell of chloride

Sometimes it's orange color – smells of bleach sometimes

Taste

Taste like chemicals
Taste like chemicals
Taste not good.
Taste often a bit chlorinated
Tastes bad. Too much iron. Shower is slightly orange
Tastes bad. We only drink filtered water.
There's a smell every now and again
Toilets and sinks have an orange film that develops when not in use for several weeks.
Too expensive in Portage. Stop raising rates!
Too hard
Too hard and does not taste good.
Too metallic and leaves chemicals on my new bathtub
Too much iron
Too much iron, sometimes too much chlorine.
Too much iron
Too much rust and lime.
Very expensive
Very hard water
Very hard.
Water discolored at times, stains baths and toilets
Water is brown
Water is discolored has floating particles in it.
Water is rusty occasionally
Water is rusty and yellow at times
Water is so hard that despite a water softener, the water tank corrodes out in less than 5 years
We are at the end of a line and frequently water has a sulfur taste and smell
We buy bottled water because of taste and rust in water.
We use filtration devices at all times. Tastes weird!
Yellow water

17. If you have had any direct contact with Portage city employees over the past year, how satisfied were you with the quality of the service received from the employee? [Very dissatisfied - specify]

Did not get back to me

Every time I call with issues/concerns, I get very little result, very poor communication. I was struck by softballs coming from city property – twice, once in a car once on a motorcycle and the result – “not our fault, turn it in.” Close softball fields or move them. City should pay for vehicle repair. Need a net so someone doesn’t get hurt

From senior center to parks to city hall, a great group

Get the run-a-round on fixing drain.

Great at the utility office for a work permit for my home. But I can’t get someone to trim a tree and sewage.

Had issues with my water bill. First person I spoke with provided wrong information. It was resolved only with supervision.

Have the city engineer put down the newspaper and do his job!

I had a street flooding problem. Treated as though I was lying. Blamed me for the problem!

I tried to get help to fill a deep pothole at a major intersection that was a danger to bicyclists (I hit it and fell). There was no follow thru.

Just got the run-around, no resolution to problem. Phone call a waste of time (city manager)

No follow up on request made to fix sidewalk

No solution for water sediment affecting our water leaks.

Parks and recreation hard to reach via phone, do not return voice messages

Police department

Police officer disrespected my privacy by shining light in my house w/o ringing doorbell/ knocking on doors. I was very concerned and scared. He did not handle himself well.

Portage planning committee

Some are not so friendly at city hall.

Some of the people collecting fees at city hall have been very short with customers!!

The clerk was not very nice.

The person at the water department wasn’t very pleasant on the phone.

Too aggressive - won’t put requirements in writing, then change minds on what is needed. Too many requirements.

Traffic speed on Avon St is terrible. I called the city and the man said he’d check into this - never did. This was Oct, 2010. Several other neighbors also called.

Very rude when you ask questions, don’t really care about my issues

Walk lights not always operative, e.g., Westnedge Mall

Yard was gouged during brush pick-up. Person on phone was nice, but the damage was not repaired.

21. If city services must be reduced, which service(s) would you suggest?

A truly good official should be able to maintain at current level without increasing taxes.
Activities and fewer clean-up dates.
All are necessary.
All departments must be evaluated for fiscal efficiency.
All of city hall should take a pay cut
All services seem important
All the over-decoration around the city offices and library, especially at Christmas time
All union foremen assigned to work at same pay as non-union.
Any that are not a necessity to have a safe/clean city
Anything but police and fire
Anything but softball, new pavement, police, fire
Arts and cultural events, recreation programs
Arts and cultural
Arts and cultural
Arts area
Assessing/inspectors for new development/treasury/maintenance
Bandshell activity, some park maintenance.
Bandshell concerts, hayloft, summer fun programs - non functional services and recreation
Bandshell programs
Beautification
Beautification - boulevards.
Better manage the budget and manage city employees better.
Bike/walking trails. Maintenance and expansion
Bikeways
Brush and leaf pickup
Brush collection
Brush pickup
Brush pickup
Brush pickup
Brush pickup
Brush pickup
Brush pickup
Brush pickup
Brush pickup
Brush pickup
Brush pickup, leaf pick up – make owner responsibility
Brush pickup recreation and culture programs, curbside recycle parks programs
Brush pickup, spring cleanup
Brush pickup, then spring clean up
Business safety inspections every summer. Also, too many police. Way too much salt used
Cable Access, maybe reduce some of the parks/recreation events (but not all), perhaps
out-sourcing more services.
Camps/programs etc. Parks should be maintained for everyone. Snow, road cleanup,

snow removal and recycling are most important.
 Celery flats, bandshell, hayloft, amphitheater
 Change curbside recycling to monthly.
 Change curbside recycling to bi-weekly
 Change leaf pick up to twice for each neighborhood (instead of 3 times). Brush collection every other month. Recycling twice a month.
 Christmas tree pick up - just provide a drop-off location. Further scale back brush pick up.
 City council and committee reduction in number of members
 City employees take a pay cut, this should start at the top.
 City hall labor
 City hall personnel, cashiers?
 City manager and planning department, make Portager online only
 City parks - not all residents use them.
 Close the brick factory.
 Code violations, yearly building inspections, parks department.- cut employees.
 Combine/share services with County and Kalamazoo, such as through purchasing.
 Consider making senior and other applicable services volunteer-based.
 Consider reduction in a number of services – snow removal, brush removal, leaf pick up for example
 Consolidate services with the county and /or Kalamazoo
 Continued efficiencies could be gained
 Cultural
 Cultural Activities
 Cultural and bandshell
 Cultural and recreational are the least essential
 Cultural events
 Cultural events
 Cultural events
 Cultural events
 Cultural events
 Cultural events
 Cultural events
 Cultural events, city employees should be working on efficiency
 Cultural events, flowers bed, senior center
 Cultural events, Hayloft events, fire works
 Cultural events, landscaping, and parks
 Cultural events, need to control city employees pension and payroll
 Cultural opportunities - Kalamazoo offers a lot and is certainly accessible. Get rid of city manager. Do not hire WMU to do survey
 Cultural programs
 Cultural programs
 Cultural programs
 Cultural programs
 Cultural programs
 Cultural programs

Cultural programs and less care of or closing some parks.
 Cultural programs such as Hayloft Theatre and Amphitheater
 Cultural services, parks and recreation
 Curbside brush collection
 Curbside brush collection
 Curbside brush pickup
 Curbside brush pickup
 Curbside brush pickup
 Curbside brush pickup
 Curbside brush removal
 Curbside frequency. Recycle every other week or once a month
 Curbside junk removal
 Curbside pickup services
 Curbside pickup, spring and fall. Leaf pickup
 Curbside pickup
 Curbside recycling
 Curbside recycling, brush pickup
 Curbside recycling, City buses
 Curbside recycling every 2 weeks
 Curbside recycling – have a big one at various parking lots that people could go to
 Curbside recycling - once a week
 Curbside recycling programs.
 Curbside recycling.
 Curbside service.
 Cut back on flowers, on some of the city street labors.
 Cut back landscaping around public library.
 Cut city staff and pay instead of services
 Cut leaf pickup to one date (not 3), cut brush pickup, eliminate city workers that stand around.
 Cut library services (cut house opened)
 Cut mayor and vice mayor and all council salaries, don't cut grass as often and stop
 planting flowers, no more boulevards.
 Cutout unnecessary expenses.
 Cuts in public safety
 December leaf pickup. Most people don't bother with the 3rd one.
 Do not give raise to city employees - rather cut their pay. No street cleaning with heavy
 machinery.
 Decorations around city hall and library
 Do recycling to every 2 weeks
 Dog catcher, surveys
 Don't cut street snow removal services!
 Don't reduce services.
 Drama, etc. at Celery Flats and bandshell.
 Entertainment programs offered during the summer
 Entertainment, recreation programs- events not utilized by the whole city

Entertainment such as amphitheaters, bandshell.
 Entitlement programs
 Expensive ones (your choice)
 Extra park decorating.
 Extravagant spending in each department. A fair share of it is administrative.
 Fall leaf pickup, spring cleanup, curbside brush collection - people can dispose of these
 Fall leaf pickup, brush pickup.
 Fall leaf pickup, spring cleanup, brush collection, summer entertainment series, Portage
 newsletter.
 Fall pickup curbside brush collection.
 Fee for recycling
 Fire Department
 Fire Department and administration.
 Fire/Police Service. Totally cut library tax - library not needed
 Fixing roads
 Flowers
 Get rid of a few of the large number of police sitting around
 Government employee's pay (political employees)
 Government employees, holiday decorations with lights - beautiful but they cost money,
 use cheaper paper for the "Portager"
 Having city car. Telling businesses on Westnedge their signs are too big
 Hazardous waste - Kalamazoo has one
 Human services – cultural, parks, recreation, etc, street repair, snow removal
 I don't know, but not police or fire
 I would prefer no services be reduced
 Ice Rink
 Increase efficiencies. Analyze what is truly needed.
 Job cuts are not a good idea - it decrease the taxable income.
 Junk clean-up, newsletter.
 Landscaping.
 Leaf and brush removal.
 Leaf pickup
 Leaf pickup
 Leaf pickup (2 times), less snow plowing in residential areas.
 Leaf pickup and recycling
 Leaf pickup and snow removal in side streets, encourage neighborhood watches to assist
 police, especially in dangerous neighborhoods
 Leaf pickup, curbside recycling, senior center, parks dept.
 Leaf pickup senior center activities.
 Leaf pickup, snow removal.
 Leaf pickup, spring cleanup, snow removal
 Leaf pickup to 2 times instead of 3. Curbside recycling could cut back to bi-weekly with
 extra containers
 Leaf pickup - we would drop it off or would city ordinance allow for barrel burnings

Less frequent curbside pickup, more volunteers at parks
Less pickup services
Library
Library, senior center, community center, camps, arts.
Lower the pay of city council, mayor etc - \$136,000 + is too much. Portage newsletter
Maintenance on bikeways - streets are primary use.
Make quality and efficiency priority, raising taxes only when absolutely necessary.
Making changes to beautify the city
Mayor
Monthly brush pickup change to quarterly.
Multilayers of management
No essential programs, cut amphitheater, camps, fun center, beach, etc.
No public service should be reduced.
No service cuts. Just wage cuts like the rest of the non-public sector
Non police/fire spending, too much on parks trees, plantings, bikeways etc.
None - all are important and appreciated
None, all services are vital
 None – reduce employee pay and benefits, at least they will still have a job, it’s the way
the world is going
Not fire or police
Not police and fire.
Not police or fire.
Not recycling. Leaf/snow removal or spring cleanup
Not spending on beautification projects. The several fountains are totally unnecessary.
Office help.
Office staff
One less leaf pickup.
Only have one leaf pickup instead of three
Park rangers, vehicles.
Park upkeep - city employees - extra projects
Parks
Parks
Parks
Parks
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Parks
Parks
Parks
Parks
Parks and cultural – hours/days of operation
Parks and/or senior center
Parks and other non-essentials first.
Parks and pathways

Parks and recreation
Parks and recreation
Parks and recreation
Parks and recreation
Parks and recreation
Parks and recreation
Parks and recreation
Parks and recreation
Parks and recreation
Parks and recreation
Parks and recreation
Parks and recreation.
Parks and recreation
Parks and recreation
Parks and recreation activities; park maintenance
Parks and recreation, not essential services
Parks and recreation programs
Parks and recreation, senior center.
Parks and recreation venues, not fire or police. Safety of citizens must be paramount.
Parks and recreation can be reduced, also some senior services
Parks and recreation, benefit service department
Parks and recreation, cuts to leader's pay and benefits through out city!
Parks and recreation activities, park maintenance
Parks and Street departments - can be privatized or utilize departments more in combination.
Parks, beaches, some pick-up services
Parks department, DPN, treasury department
Parks, flowers
Parks - least likely to affect serving and protecting citizens.
Pay cut to top 100 highest paid city employees.
People doing nothing when I go to city hall to pay bills.
People who work inside at the city of Portage. Customer service people.
Perhaps consolidate office workers in city hall.
Planting flowers
Planting trees
Police
Police
Police
Police and fire
Police, Parks, Lifeguards, etc.
Police, see two cars at a time in parking lots
Police. Seems there are a lot of police vehicles just sitting at the police station
Police. There are a lot of police vehicles just sitting at the police station
Portage Gazette – it's useless

Portage Road

Prayer services at meetings (separation of church and state!)

Print the Portager on newsprint, combine July 4th fireworks with a neighboring town, encourage volunteer trail/parks maintenance to offset costs. Could be good for teens on college applications

Programs – Celery Flats, Bandshell

Provide compost bins instead of leaf pickup

Public safety and utilities are absolute priorities. Everything else should be on the table

Quarterly brush collection.

Recreation

Recreation.

Recreation

Recreation, arts.

Recreation, Ice rink

Recreation and cultural activities, frequency of brush pickup

Recreation programs

Recreation programs

Recreation programs

Recreation programs

Recreation programs, camps, concerts, planting flowers.

Recreational and cultural programs.

Recreational and cultural services

Recreational, cultural

Recreational program, arts programs, reduce management to a lower level like you have done with the police and fire department

Recycle – brush collection

Recycle program

Recycle program, use less salt on roads

Recycling

Recycling

Recycling

Recycling, brush collection

Recycling, every 2 weeks

Recycling, people can do it at a center

Recycling, pickup

Recycling, spring cleanup.

Reduce administrative and health care cost

Reduce administrative costs (or consolidate number of supervisors)

Reduce amount of flowers and plants (annuals)

Reduce bandshell concerts and activities

Reduce budgets equally.

Reduce city benefits, staff, and manager's input over what goes on outside of benefits

Reduce curbside recycling

Reduce curbside recycling to 2 times a month, reduce brush pickup cycles

Reduce discretionary services but keep police and fire.
 Reduce/eliminate leaf pickup, brush pickup, cut back on parks
 Reduce everyone's pay and benefits
 Reduce frequency of recycling, trash and leaf pickup.
 Reduce infrastructure upgrades: paving, facilities
 Reduce pay for employees.
 Reduce recycling pick-ups and/or have drop stations.
 Reduce recycling services to 2 times monthly
 Reduce salary and benefits, eliminate printed and mailed copies of newsletters, email only.
 Reduce Sat and Sun snow removal. Collect recycle every 2 weeks
 Reduce services! Reduce fire fighters. There are no fires – very few
 Reduce the number of “functionaries” or cut their pay. Existing city employees work harder and smarter.
 Reduce the salting on roads.
 Review all services and a percentage reduction on all departments if they all seem equal in importance.
 Road salt application, stop wasting money on bike lanes and islands like on Oakland
 Roads
 Schools and cultural events
 Schools and cultural events
 Senior center
 Senior center, some parks activities
 Services need to remain, cut amounts the city manager and other top city officials are making
 Services not used by many
 Services utilized the least or that could be fulfilled via volunteers.
 Snow plowing, leaf pickup, trash pickup
 Snow plowing on major streets - waste of time and money.
 Snow plowing, reduce brush pickup to twice a year, parks programs.
 Snowplow drivers who hit curbs and dig up yards without curbs.
 Snow plows - 3 plows on almost dry pavement is ridiculous
 Social and cultural
 Softball leagues, summer fun center, summer drama camps, programs at bandshell, amphitheater, hayloft theater, etc.
 Some of the parks taking care of could be done by different groups, such as adopt a park
 Spring and fall cleanup
 Spring cleanup
 Spring cleanup
 Spring cleanup, combine with brush collection or curbside recycling.
 Spring cleanup, curbside brush pickup.
 Spring cleanup, leaf removal, brush removal
 Spring cleanup, make a pay-for-use alternative available
 Spring cleanup program
 Spring cleanup. Brush pickup unless major
 Spring pickup

Spring pickup/ displays/ cultural events.
Spring planting of so much
Start with cultural events, then park services, then staff levels
Stop building bike trails and picking up brush.
Stop building new schools as enrollment continues to decline.
Stop buying tulips and then giving them away
Stop making new bike trails and parks causing animals to come in our yards
Stop planting annual flowers. Use perennials.
Stop putting up unnecessary signage (e.g., bike signs, flower planting)
Street cleaner – fine people who don't clean their sewers
Street repairs budget on Westnedge and I-94.
Street sweeper
Street sweepers
Summer programs, flowers/display along library.
The most costly services should be curtailed.
The services that people who want low taxes enjoy most.
There are a lot of areas to cut money – if we the people talk about it we don't count – I
have been to city meetings – do you get my thought now?
Traffic engineering, Parks
Two instead of 3 leaf pickups.
Unnecessary layers of management of city
Unsure. Really like curbside recycling, brush and leaf collection. Administrative costs?
Upper management positions eliminated
Watering the boulevards, library, newsletter, quit plowing the roads with only 1 or 2
inches of snow
We do not have city services in our neighborhood
We have just the right amount of services for a suburban bedroom community. Perhaps
we can concentrate on efficiency.
Weekly curbside recycling program
When repairing or creating roads, no boulevards
Would pay reasonable fee for spring cleanup, recycling, brush pick up
You may not have to reduce services if city employees were more productive. This
afternoon I walked by a small city park. One man was mowing the grass. Waiting for him were
two men sitting in a city truck. Another employee was sitting in a truck at the entrance to the
park. It appears to be a waste of equipment and employee time to have one doing a job and three
sitting in trucks. This is not a rare occasion as I frequently see one job being done and multiple
employees watching. Why not try raising productivity instead of taxes.

23. How do you currently obtain information about what is going on in Portage city government? [Other – specify]

Business owners who follow city affairs

Commissioners

Employees

Family member is a city employee

Friends

Friends

Friends

Just watch, look and listen – city council does what they want - not the people's choice

KATS meetings

Library

Library

Local interaction such as talking to friends

Mlive

Mlive

Neighbors

Neighbors

Neighbors.

PDL

Personal contact with city employees by being on PCS advisory board.

Portage Senior Center

Rotary

Senior center

Talk with people.

Talking to other people

Talking to other people

TV

Watch city council and planning commission meetings on TV

Word of mouth, local businesses.

Word of mouth

Word of mouth

Word of mouth

Word of mouth, facebook, city officials.

24. What is your preferred method of obtaining information about what is going on in Portage city government? [Other – specify]

Call City Hall
Direct mail
DirecTV
Drive down the road
Electronic newsletter.
Email
Email newsletter
Friends
Friends
Friends
Go online with email sent to announce with link.
Library
Mlive iphone app
Neighbor
Neighbors and Neighborhood Watch program
Non-affiliated websites
PDL
Portage Senior Center.
Senior Times
Word of mouth

27. Do you think you are getting good services for your city tax dollars? (If No, please specify)

Allow too many cars to be parked on lawns, allow grass to grow too long

At times during the week on Sprinkle between Zylman and R Ave (by the way the completion is great), traffic was unnecessarily detoured. There is a need for some spot replacement

Better roads - less spending on the walls that really destroy the beauty of the land.

Biggest complaint is snow removal. We pay a lot of taxes but because we're on a cul-de-sac, it can go days before we're serviced.

Brick walls

City council at fault

City government wages are high for what they do.

Could be better

Cuts need to be made to reduce tax burden.

Do not fill around manholes and swept street in spring unless called. That was automatic before.

Don't believe that my family is getting over the \$5K in taxes I pay each year.

Don't touch my taxes! Every one of us has to do more with less, you need to figure out a way to do the same!

Except for roads

Homes are not properly assessed. They do not provide consistent criteria to base their assessment fees. We have been fighting our increased taxes every year since 2007.

I am not happy with the time it takes to plow my street (it can take up to three days).

I feel we need more police officers on the streets and fire stations. The police officers need to be more visible on our streets and in our neighborhoods.

I live in a condo and don't get services like trash and leaf pickup.

I pay a significant amount of taxes. I want Portage city to use those tax dollars in a very frugal and responsible way

I see cars parked on lawns (some for sale, some just parked) against code. Homes in need of repairs. Mainly paint and junk picked up.

I think Portage has grown to a size where there is a lot of "fat" in every department

I would say yes if my tax money were actually staying in Portage schools

I'm retired and even with homestead I don't see \$133 a month value.

Lack of snow removal on side streets is terrible and dangerous

Like any other community, there is a lot of waste and too many employees doing nothing when you go in city hall.

Living in Oakshores, on a dollar per dollar basis, taxes are actually worse than Bergen County, New Jersey - nothing to be proud of

Lots of waste in a lot of areas. We can save a lot if they listen and think - of people. We are the ones that pay for everything in Portage and their paychecks

Maybe more than necessary

My street needs drainage issues solved.

My taxes are too high for the value of my property.

My taxes increase while the quality of services decrease, this is strange.
My taxes seem to go up every year while others have gone down.
Need better control of city pensions and employees wages at top
Need better traffic management, single source waste management, better snow removal.
Nice to have more pick-up than just spring for furniture.
No city sewer on Angling, south of Romence
No more parks
Not enough traffic control for excessive speed on Sprinkle from Romence to S. Ave.
Not progressive in eliminating costs, very reluctant to change
 Not the issue – too much waste and lack of intergovernmental cooperation. Should be able to get same service level for less money
 Not when the school board spends hundreds of thousands of dollars renovating Lake Center and then demolishes it after building a new building within 2 years. They also add fancy facades to the buildings requiring extra heat. Why spend half a million dollars to get rid of Marsha Wells? We got rid of a couple members.
 Only because the tax money used for 3 new schools do not effect our children. Would be nice to have our children benefit from a new middle/high school
 Pay to get into parks. Tax money already used for thousands of miles of bikepaths. Any major construction at all, the city has to pay for an engineering company. Why have a city engineer that does nothing?
 Pick up following ice storm was terrible - too much damage to lawns by the lift truck operators - they were careless.
 Planning commission unwilling to change property zoning and willing to ruin neighborhoods.
 Plow the roads correctly but stop plowing when only 1 or 2 inches on the roads - this is Michigan, removing that snow is wasteful.
 Portage has great schools, keeps the rif-raf out. But city doesn't care if businesses live or die. Clean place to live, very safe. Pays some of its employees way too much. Does too many things
Portage seems to do a lot of frivolous unnecessary things with its money
Private road, no snow removal, street maintenance, brush pickup, spring clean up, leaf pickup.
Roads and “traffic engineering”
 Roads are bad, brush pickup is about 75% completed, with no cleanup after, snow plows just salt and make a mess, streets are not cleaned. Yet, everything seems to be clean around city hall. Bad communication when I call with issues. I guess tax payers are second rate since we pay for city workers to do terrible jobs.
Roads, more bush pickup, more cleanup.
Schools are not getting supplies. Seniors are not getting any concessions on bills or any services.
 Schools built too expensive! Why not revamp old ones? Ceilings even in elementary schools tall enough for Goliath.
Services decrease, taxes increase.
Snow plowing is not enough. Trimming trees, water floods
 Snow removal and street cleaning was horrible this year- we have kids to get to school safely, and the ice was dangerous. Then we ended up with stitches in an arm from a bike

accident caused by winter sand not being cleaned up.

Snow removal, cleaning streets - except city hall! I think city should plow all city sidewalks so you wouldn't need to spend money sending "friendly reminders"

Snow removal could be better and faster.

Snow removal has been steadily getting worse. Road conditions have been hazardous at all times of day with more sand than salt being applied

Snow removal is terrible, and we are always last.

Snow removal is a big issue

Snow removal on the cul-de-sacs

Snow removal, road repair

Some programs are too expensive

Some roads seem to get more attention than needed and others go wanting.

Someone wasted lots of money on the 12th street and Milham roundabout

Speeders stopped seldom! Snow removal is poor

Still not managed very well when it comes to being very "Top heavy" with ratio of managers or dept heads to actual employees

Streets are in terrible shape. Portage police are pushed over by the Kazoo police. City need to send reminder to the homeowners about keeping sidewalk clear of snow and ice.

Cleaning brush and leaves from their curbs rather than waiting for the city to do it, keeping storm drains clear.

Taxes are excessive due to school, KNESA and KVCC subsidies. City needs to cut back on services such as leaf collection, parks, and bandshell programs, etc.

Taxes are too high. Reduce taxes, reduce services

Taxes too high – too many employees – private sector much better at providing services

That new school is stupid

The city budget is approximately \$61 million, but not sure I understand all of the services provided. Also not sure that I understand the fairness of taxes

The main roads get plowed or paved, but residential streets get very poor service, they don't even patch all the holes when they go down a street. Also the only way to get an area cleaned up is to register a formal complaint. Trees that hang over wires are ignored until they fall on the wires, especially on residential streets.

The parks are great (but the roads are simply awful)

The roads are terrible!

Too expensive.

Too many services overlap. Large fire trucks that go to medical emergencies?

Too much government! Too many police and firefighters! If the economy were good, we could pay taxes. Let's be strong Americans who take care of common sense stuff on our own, and not have all these police and firemen on payroll. We definitely need a few police and firemen, but not this many.

Too much local government waste.

Too much money on trails, bikeways, and beautification

Too much money spent on areas that are higher profile and near city hall - not spread across the city at large; street services and bush, leaf, and other pickups are poorly executed and managed

Too much waste

Too much wasted money in areas that is not needed

Various services provided by department of streets and equipment (such as pickup of leaves, brush, and xmas trees, and spring cleanup) are available through private landscape companies and should not be administered by city government and paid for with tax dollars.

Waste too much on boulevard upkeep. They get in way of snow removal and dangerous.

Wasted money on lights for pedestrian crossings. Too many traffic lights slow driving everywhere

Water rates are way too high

We are losing more people - you have no hardship plans about water and taxes for people out of work. Portage has them too! You never do anything to help the needy of Portage. I've been in Portage for over 50 years and I have never seen it this hard to live in Portage, with half of the homes for sale. Makes me very uneasy, day or night. I'm grateful I have my dog for protection.

We are last to have snow removal on our street.

We are paying for roads that are far better than ones that need it.

We do not get any city services other than water and sewer

We don't get some of the services because we live in a condominium development. We pay taxes too!

We live on West Lake. We pay more property tax but receive fewer services than in non-lake residents. Snow removal and the condition of our roads need improvement.

We should be able to better manage the city budget and it's employees.

We need more police officers on the streets and fire stations in and around Portage. Police officers need to be more visible on our streets and neighborhoods.

We not only pay taxes, we have water taxes at \$150, some fees for water level, for cleaning out the clearing to other lakes, and now they are talking about another \$150 for weed control in the lake.

We pay for leaf pickup/spring cleanup and snow removal but do not receive any of these services. Would like more leaf and limb pickup or be able to burn it myself.

You are making too many new buildings, too many flowers, you don't utilize the large buildings that were once UpJohn or Phizer that're for sale. Your pay raises must stop. We live on a fixed income with no cost of living and we pay our bills, sometimes we only have soup so what makes you better than the masses of older, and lower income people who live here. To quote FDR, "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have to little."

You cut services

**28. Is there a problem with the condition of neighborhood homes and yards in Portage?
[Yes, severe problem – please specify]**

A couple of homes in our immediate vicinity are ruining the appearance of our street.

A few all around the city, but not in one area.

A number of foreclosed or empty houses in the Crossroads mall area

After the storm, people on 12th St are not getting rid of trees. The west side is Texas township and they don't have brush pickup, so they just leave it by the road. Corner of Heathrow and 12th St, brush just piled by the road. (not pretty)

An inspector should notify a home when it's not being maintained

Basic upkeep and lawn mowing

Because of so many houses for sale

Certain residents don't tend their yards and let grass and weeds grow too long

Complained about neighbor's weeds coming in my yard, but they were never cut down.

Corner of Angling Rd, rosebushes over sidewalks, overgrown bushes covering windows of houses. The home owners have never trimmed the rose bushes or the evergreen in front of the house.

Corner of Stanley and Portage. Needs to be demolished

Curbside pickup leaves brush out on street too early. Cars parked on lawns.

Damaged trees still down, rv's and boats in yards

Depends on neighborhood

Devon and Warwick

Foreclosures leave empty homes uncared for

Front yard trash. Autos parked on lawn, clothes line in front. Trash year round. 13 cats 2 dogs in 1 home equals tires, gas cans, trash

Hoarder neighbor

House next to us is very neglected and looks like many renters

Houses surrounding PNHS are gross

I don't think the blight ordinance is really enforced but understand the kind of diligence that requires.

In my neighborhood

In some neighborhoods

In the Lanen income area.

Junk cars, junk in general, Angling Rd.

Junk in people's yards, cars everywhere, lawns overgrown, poor upkeep on houses, lots of foreclosed/abandoned houses

Knee high grass all summer!

Lack of blight enforcement.

Lawn mowing and clean up

Lawns not mowed, cars parked on lawns

Lawns not mowed, cars and recreational vehicles parked on lawns. Police could stop and explain this is not allowed in Portage

Maybe due to foreclosures and lack of keeping that property up to normal standards.

Most people take good care of home and yard - a few do not

Multiple cars for one home parked on street with boats and trailers. Two large trash cans near the street all week long with overflowing trash most days.

My neighbor has concrete, dirt, junk behind his barn so he doesn't have to see it, but I do

My neighbors keep their house like trash.

Neighbor adjoining should maintain clean fence line and backyard

Neighbor's yard on Chatham

Neighbors who leave toys, discarded household goods, garbage cans etc. in front yard.

Neighbors who leave dead trees in the yard.

Night street light off for one year.

Not in my neighborhood, but in others

Our neighbor's yard is not mowed

Overgrown yard at corner lot

Overhanging limb over sidewalk. Grass not edged back from sidewalks. Hard on bike riders.

People from the Airport Inn

Property owners not keeping up

People on Oreswick Lane have let their home go to ruin. They also have animals trapped inside - animal control has been out, the city has sued them, told them to paint. They are not doing it. We all feel helpless here. Our property values have plummeted due to their mess.

Problem with barking dogs sometimes

Purchases of foreclosed homes at bargain prices attract buyers with marginal incomes and lack of means to properly maintain their property

Rental residential property not well maintained/less safe. Commercial landlords need homes for rent to pass minimum safety codes every 5 years – change permit fee

Road condition in subdivision

Rockford - doesn't mow, kill weeds, etc...

Some are not aware of the standards we live by and the responsibilities.

Some houses could use some work

Some neighborhoods

Some neighborhoods look kind of shabby

Some neighborhoods yes, others, no

Some places – not here

Someone has to register a complaint on a yearly basis to get yards cleaned up. Why can't the city flag those areas and do a regular inspection?

Some yards and homes need a little work.

Starting to see decline in individual pick up

The area needs to be cleared of weeds - and tree limbs.

Too many trucks, trailers, boats parked in drive, yard and street. Some homes are never maintained to city standards.

Too much yard competition. I have crab grass, not fair.

Unsold vacant homes - conditions of many are poor

Vacant lots, need to mow weeds more often

Vacant lots overgrown

We have homes on our road that are in total disarray. They have garbage in the yard and do not mow

We have recent problem following a foreclosure sale
Windstorm damage- physical and aesthetic
Yards not controlled with mowing and trash.
Yard trash, cars, boarded windows, lack of cleanup and mowing

31. Is there a problem with the flow of traffic on any other Portage streets other than South Westnedge Avenue? [Yes – specify streets]

12th Street.

12th and Milham should have had a street light rather than roundabout!

12th St and Milham

12th St and Centre

12th St and Centre

12th St, going South at Centre

All side streets west of Westnedge around the Mall and strip malls.

Always been a problem with stoplight at Devon-Milham-Monticello. People at Devon and Monticello have to wait sometime 3-4 stoplight changes

Angling, speed too fast.

Bishop and Centre at Sprinkle during baseball and soccer. Lights cycle too quickly.

Both ends of Constitution – lights are not long enough for turning or from coming out of

Curious Kids

Centre

Centre

Centre

Centre

Centre

Centre

Centre

Centre (from Lovers Lane to Westnedge). It is a race track. 35 mph limit, most go 45-50!

Centre and 12th

Centre and 12th 12th and Milham

Centre and Lovers Lane, light very inefficient

Centre and Milham.

Centre and Portage at times

Centre and Shaver, Centre and Westnedge.

Centre and Shaver – too many boulevards

Centre and Shaver intersection, Milham and Westnedge intersections

Centre and US131

Centre and Westnedge, Centre and Shaver.

Centre at Portage.

Centre at the on and off ramps of US 131. Trying to get on 131 southbound in the morning is a nightmare and is very congested. Very dangerous.

Centre from 131 to Westnedge

Centre in front of PCHS, even with all the “improvements”

Centre in the AM

Centre is very congested during rush hours

Centre, Milham and 12th St.

Centre - need light at Centre and Brookwood

Centre, Romence, Oakland

Centre - speed

Centre, to turn across from city hall, etc.

Centre - turning left without lights

Centre via Loehr Acres Area.

Centre west. We need a signal light at Brookwood Center for exiting our neighborhood.

Centre. Travel is way too fast between Oakland and 131, especially on curve.

Centre - Westnedge. At light trying to get kids to school - this is still a joke. Ask a women next time to design this area, it will run smoothly. We moms seem to be able to make this happen with ease.

Corduroy. No dead end sign - we get a lot of unnecessary traffic.

Carrier drive

During street repairs, like when 12th St closed, I think better planning could be done.

E. Shore as a detour during Sprinkle construction

Eastbound Romence at Westnedge

Fast on major E/W roads like Milham and Romence

From 131, exit 21- trying to turn left onto Centre is very difficult. Perhaps a light can be installed.

Have your traffic engineer look into smoother traffic flow at intersections that are controlled by lights – unnecessarily long

Hollywood has become a drag strip to new development. Need stop signs!

I-94 interchange

In and out of PNHS/North Middle – Oregon is very dangerous! Horrible bottle necks

Innisbrook or Muirfield in Woodbridge

Intersection at Romence and Sears Drive

Intersection of Centre and Angling. Traffic signal does not work properly. I have called city on this.

Intersection of Milham and Oakland. The light stays green a long time for those turning but very short for those going straight (especially for the Oakland traffic)

Just during peak times/holiday

Kilgore

Kilgore

Kilgore

Kilgore and Oakland

Kilgore and Oakland

Kilgore and Oakland.

Kilgore and Westnedge. Oakland and I-94.

Kilgore between Oakland and Westnedge

Kilgore between Oakland and Westnedge is a nightmare at peak traffic times. Need a light midway to create a break in traffic. Westnedge near Centre (though that's being corrected by new school)

Kilgore needs a right turn only lane on to South Westnedge.

Kilgore U turn. Set up a I-94 exit to Portage Rd.

Lights not timed efficiently at Centre and 131, Centre and 12th, and Centre and Angling.

Long Lake between Waruf and P

Lovers Lane between Kilgore and Milham, it should be 40 mph

Melody - speed limit.

Meredith - speed

Milham

Milham

Milham

Milham

Milham

Milham

Milham

Milham

Milham

Milham

Milham, almost impossible to make a left turn, long wait for a right turn during the day

Milham and 12th (roundabout will not fix it, only add to it.) Centre and Angling, and 131 and 12th st.

Milham and Constitution at start and end of school days

Milham and Oakland

Milham and Oakland

Milham and Oakland.

Milham and Oakland, speeding on Oakland

Milham and Oakland interchange. I-94 westbound off Oakland

Milham and Oakland intersection

Milham and Oakland area

Milham and Westnedge intersection; and we are concerned about how the round-about will work on the corner of 9th and Milham

Milham at Oakland

Milham between Westnedge and Oakland.

Milham between Westnedge and Oakland

Milham by PNHS

Milham from Westnedge to Oakland

Milham north on to Portage

Milham, Oakland, Centre

Milham - Oakland, driving too fast 45-50

Milham, Oakland, new turn at Milham, 12th St.

Milham, Oakland, Portage

Milham - Oakland to Kilgore, Milham - Oakland to Romence

Milham - Oakland to Westnedge, Oakland from I-94 to Centre

Milham, Romence, Centre, Oakland

Milham, Romence, Westnedge.

Milham west of Oakland.

Milham west of Oakland, could use another traffic signal

More on-demand lights so you're not sitting when there isn't any other traffic (early am, late pm)

Need light or turning lane at Stanley and Portage.

Oakland
 Oakland
 Oakland
 Oakland (because of work on I-94 at Westnedge.)
 Oakland (from Kilgore to Howard) It needs widening
 Oakland and 12th - speed
 Oakland and I-94 in front of churches
 Oakland and I-94 and Milham intersections
 Oakland and I-94
 Oakland and I-94
 Oakland and I-94
 Oakland and I-94
 Oakland and I-94
 Oakland and Kilgore
 Oakland and Milham
 Oakland and Milham
 Oakland and Milham corner going south merge into one - someone is going to be killed because many drive in the right lane and cut into the other lane by the apartment.
 Oakland and Milham - long wait, traffic
 Oakland and Milham, Oakland and Kilgore (nature's way preschool)
 Oakland and Milham.
 Oakland and Romence.
 Oakland and Vincent. Cannot get out 8-9 AM, 4-6 PM
 Oakland at 5pm
 Oakland at I-94, Kilgore and Westnedge, Crossroads ring road and Romence, Centre and Westnedge and Shaver
 Oakland at Milham - northbound. Traffic light does not stay green long enough to clear traffic.
 Oakland at times
 Oakland at Vincent - desperately need a traffic light there to allow Vincent traffic to exit/enter.
 Oakland between Centre and continuing north to Parkview in Kalamazoo, especially in winter when road is very slippery
 Oakland between I-94 and Milham
 Oakland between I-94 and Milham
 Oakland between Milham and Kilgore - lights are timed poorly
 Oakland between Romence and Kilgore. Romence between Oakland and Westnedge.
 Oakland by I-94 on/off ramp
 Oakland can get busy
 Oakland, Centre; Angling. Light is too short for any traffic during peak hours
 Oakland, Constitution at north end, Romence from Westnedge to Oakland
 Oakland during morning and evening commute time
 Oakland – Greenbriar
 Oakland – Milham
 Oakland – particularly during rush hour and church events for the new church on Vincent
 Oakland from Kilgore to Romance.

Oakland from Kilgore to Romence - volume of traffic and ability to get in middle lane to go straight to Romence

Oakland from Kalamazoo to Centre.

Oakland, Kilgore

Oakland, Kilgore

Oakland, Kilgore

Oakland, Kilgore, Milham

Oakland, Milham

Oakland, Milham

Oakland, Milham, Portage, I-94

Oakland, Milham - rush hour

Oakland - more congested right because ramp is closed on Westnedge

Oakland - North of I-94

Oakland North of Milham due to ramps closed to I-94.

Oakland - North on Centre

Oakland, Portage

Oakland, Portage, Centre

Oakland, Shaver

Oakland, South of I-94.

Oakland speed limit too low

Oakland, Sprinkle

Oakland, W. Milham, Centre

Oakland, Westnedge, Romence, Milham, Portage

Oakland- because of rerouting 12th and Westnedge.

Old Westnedge by Portage Central

Osterhout and Portage intersection.

Osterhout and Portage needs a light

Osterhout and Portage. Needs a traffic light!

Osterhout – a lot of speeding

Osterhout - Too fast

Parkview and 12th St. is impossible for 12th St. traffic. We need a light!

Please synchronize the lights on Westnedge. Why stop at Gladys or Andy when there is no cross traffic, for example?

Portage

Portage

Portage

Portage

Portage

Portage

Portage

Portage

Portage

Portage

Portage and Centre, Portage and Romence – people cut through the corner

Portage and I-94 area
Portage and Oakland
Portage and Sprinkle
Portage between Centre and Kilgore
Portage between Centre and Kilgore
Portage between Centre and Bacon
Portage – need a light at Forest and Portage
Portage, interchange at Kilgore and Portage
Portage needs a light or crossing button at S. Shore. Cannot get across Portage, very dangerous
Portage, Oakland
Portage, Oakland
Portage, Sprinkle
Portage - timing of lights
Portage - too fast and need a stoplight at South Shore
Q where it meets the 131 ramps, near 12th street. That whole bridge area is a mess at 7:45.
Red light - stay longer on Hendeop
Romence
Romence
Romence
Romence and Centre can be very busy
Romence and Centre can be very busy
Romence between Westnedge and Oakland
Romence - driving late afternoon rush hours weekdays.
Romence from Westnedge to Oakland
Romence, Oakland
Romence, Oakland, Centre, Westnedge during peak times
Romence, Oakland, Centre.
Romence, Portage. Need a left turn lane from Romence to turn North on Portage Road.
Romence, west of Westnedge.
Ruth, Gladys, Pella (can't get out or in)
Schuring
Shaver
Shaver
Shaver, light turns red when there is no cross traffic - waste gas, cause pollution.
Shaver, Portage, Romence
South Shore at Westnedge - people on South Shore do not always stop at sign- very dangerous.
Speed on Zylman and East Shore
Speeding on Constitution, late evenings between 12am-4am
Sprinkle
Sprinkle and Meredith. Meredith is like the Indy 500 with the Stryker and FEDEX employees
Sprinkle Road - speed limit is too high.
Starbrook traffic goes too fast with many young kids on the street. Would like some stop signs.
Tearing up Oakland and Westnedge at same time was dumb
The area around city hall. Too many lights and bottlenecked traffic. A total disaster.

The green light for northbound Oakland Drive at Milham is too short many times
The lights at Milham and Westnedge are a bit long
The right lane at Romence and Westnedge should be straight or right turn only.
Time when lights go to flashing on Bacon and Portage.
Too much 'cut through' traffic on Concord - mostly Walnut trails people
Traffic light at the corner of Oakland and Vincent
Traffic light sensor at Angling and Centre still needs tweeking. (North/South sensors on Angling, especially at turn lane when heading N)
Traffic light sensors do not see motorcycles
Traffic lights - vision and delays
Traffic lights are poorly timed. One should be able to drive the speed limit and pass through green lights – not stop at every light. Wastes gas and time!
Turn signal on Shaver and Westnedge going North - too short
Turning left on Melody from Shaver. Melody and Westnedge needs a light during school events.
Turning off and on Vincent from Oakland.
Vincent and Oakland - needs a light for traffic 5:00-6:30
Vincent between Oakland and Amaline
West to east Kilgore at Westnedge. West to east Romence at Westnedge. Northbound Lovers Lane at Kilgore. Possibly east to west Kilgore at Westnedge.
Westnedge at Portage Central M.S.
Westnedge in front of the schools in the mornings.
Winters

32. In general, what do you feel are the best two features of Portage?

A feeling of safety and security, the quality of community services

Affluent population separated from the hillbillys and cultural diversity.

A nice environmental clean city. Recreation facilities.

A nice place to live.

Appearance, convenience.

A safe place – good schools – good shaping

A very nice city to live in. Very clean and respectable.

A very pleasant way of life in Portage.

Access to shopping. City responses.

Access to stores, etc. Schools

All of the shopping and services we need conveniently located and easily accessible, parks, revenues, and bikeways are big pluses

All the flowers around city hall and the library area. Christmas light display.

Appearance and location

Area, pleasant people, clean city.

Atmosphere – schools. Quality of life

Attractive landscapes, feeling safe

Austin Lake. Parks and opportunities to get outdoors (bikeways)

Availability of free or low cost entertainment at the Celery Flats and Bandshell. All the bike/walk trails including bike lanes on the streets.

Available activities/services. Acceptable traffic.

Available facilities. City Services.

Awesome parks. Trees are wonderful, but why did they plant trees right under power lines on Milham re-do? They are just going to need to be trimmed and will impair vision of drivers when they get larger.

Balance between industry, commercial, residential. Recreation, activities, and ability to move throughout the community by bicycle trails.

Beautiful parks and Library

Beauty of the overall city. Amount of retail available.

Best restaurants, bike and walking paths.

Bicentennial trails. Portage public library

Bike and walking trails, lakes and parks

Bike and walking pathways/trails. School system.

Bike paths and parks. Quality of schools

Bike paths and parks

Bike paths and trees.

Bike paths, leaf, brush and spring cleanups.

Bike trail, district library

Bike trails

Bike trails and walking trails. Enforcement of city ordinance in neighborhoods.

Bike trails and parks. Easy and convenient shopping.

Bike trails and lanes. Lakes/creek

Bike trails, cleanliness of city.
 Bike trails, curbside services (leaf, brush and junk removal)
 Bike trails - it would be nice to have them groomed/plowed in winter. District Library
 Bike trails, parks, library.
 Bike trails, schools
 Bike trails, variety of shopping
 Bike trails/walking trails
 Bike trails. Parks
 Bike trails. Parks
 Bike trails. Parks.
 Bike/walking paths. How clean it looks
 Bike/walking trails. Variety of stores.
 Bike ways, the city is clean.
 Bikeways – trails. Schools
 Bikeways, trails, bike lanes. Great schools and access to commercial and retail.
 Bikeways. Snow removal
 Bikeways. The new PCHS.
 Biking and walking trails
 Brand new schools. Parks
 Brush, leaf, spring cleanup and curb side recycling. Ease of getting around town, amount
 of business located within
 Brush pickup quarterly. Spring cleanup
 Celery Flats
 Celery Flats and Parks. Police - although you need a few more full time officers
 Celery Flats area and trails
 Celery Flats, recycling weekly
 Celery Flats trail. Shopping
 Celery Flats. Band shell activities
 Celery Flats. City bikeways and trailways
 Celery Flats. New schools
 Celery Flats. School System
 Citizen involvement – volunteerism, shopping choices.
 City bikeways and parks
 City hall. Beautification of land (flowers - Christmas decor etc) Schools! 41 million well
 spent on PCHS plus elementary schools (12th St, Lake Center, PNHS)
 City looks very nice, always kept up for the most part. The schools are also wonderful.
 City parks are wonderful. Choices for housing and range of prices are great.
 City Parks. Walking Trails.
 City pride, clean streets beautiful flowers; friendly people
 City services
 City services and parks.
 City services are great! Leaf pickup, recycling, spring pickup. Schools. Cultural events
 i.e. festivals, Celery Flats events, parades, bandshell events, parades, activities at parks
 City services, maintenance

City services. Business availability. Range of schools and available neighborhood.
 City services. Education
 City services. Recreational opportunity
 City services. Tax rate for those services.
 City services. Tax rate for those services.
 City walkways. Opportunities such as Hayloft theater, Celery Flats, etc.
 Clean
 Clean
 Clean and attractive (boulevards)
 Clean and well-maintained. Good services, i.e. fall and spring leaf pickup
 Clean city
 Clean city
 Clean, handy, trees, parks - Celery Flats. Safety
 Clean city – less problem with crime – above average residents in general – large variety
 of restaurants – large variety of shopping centers and grocery centers – very good schools –
 (very good city for young and old people)
 Clean city – good appearance. Very well run city
 Clean city – good appearance. Very well run city
 Clean city. Up keep and maintained.
 Clean friendly city. Good government services with moderate taxes, relatively good
 government sensitivity to public opinions.
 Clean, neat. Good services
 Clean neighborhoods. Cultural events
 Clean orderly atmosphere. A feeling of safety.
 Clean safe environment. It's reasonably dog friendly
 Clean town. No more overhead wires on Westnedge. Good sewer, water and roads
 Clean. Family friendly (lots of parks and playgrounds, great library program)
 Clean. Nice business sector.
 Clean. Quiet
 Clean! Parks/trails
 Cleanliness and beauty of our city. Friendliness of residents.
 Cleanliness and city bike paths, parks
 Cleanliness and Snow Removal
 Cleanliness – police and fire
 Cleanliness in general, police and fire.
 Cleanliness of our city. The library lane area.
 Cleanliness of streets and neighborhood and shopping
 Cleanliness of streets and neighborhood and shopping
 Cleanliness of the community and the quiet environment.
 Cleanliness, police, everything available
 Cleanliness. Arts
 Clearly marked streets. No one way streets. Streets go only N-S-E-W
 Close proximity to businesses
 Close to everything. Safe.

Close to private sector businesses. Is a hub for the county
 Close to shopping and services
 Community.
 Community feeling. Safety. Beautiful parks and trails
 Community. Caring
 Condition of streets and sidewalks. Overall great quality of life
 Condition of streets. Appearance of neighborhood and commercial district
 Continual upgrade to overall community. Nice place to live
 Continuing progress the city is making
 Convenience and schools
 Convenience of medical care on and around Centre St. Beautiful flowering trees and
 flowers along street and around city offices and library.
 Convenience of stores
 Convenience to shopping, medical care, parks.
 Convenience. Progressive growth
 Cost effective use of tax dollars. Planning for the future and all its changes. Parks are
 great too! Something for everyone
 Crime levels are low. For the most part it is clean and nice to live here
 Crossroad Mall – post office, Southland – strip mall
 Cultural appointments. Trailways
 Curbside cleanup/leaves. The Parks
 Curbside, leaf, trash pickup, etc. Fire Department.
 Curbside pick ups – garbage, recycling, brush, spring
 Curbside recycling. Trails/green space
 District Library. Portage senior center is a big plus.
 Doesn't feel crowded. Good stores
 Ease of access to medical, shopping and all things in general. A good mix
 Ease of getting to stores, restaurants, highways, etc...I love the library
 Ease of reaching agencies and being able to discuss concerns. Cleanliness of city streets,
 parks, school system.
 Easy access
 Easy access to mall and shopping.
 Easy to drive around, no complicated roadways. For the most part the schools are good
 for the kids.
 Education and community
 Education facilities. Relatively quiet environment.
 Education/Schools. City Services
 Environment - feeling of security and pleasant surroundings - trails, roadways, assistance
 with cleanup and maintenance: recycling, fall and spring pickups.
 Excellent city parks and trailways. Always kept very clean.
 Excellent schools. Beautiful neighborhoods and lakes.
 Excellent schools. Bike trails
 Excellent trails, availability of parks. Schools
 Family friendly. Senior Center

Family oriented events. The city parks.
Family-oriented. Access to wide range of services/events
Feels homey, like a small town, although it is getting to be a big city
Fire and Police Departments and the Parks
Fire department. Main roads are kept clean.
Fire department. Police officers
Fire dept, police dept
Fire protection and leaf pickup
Fire protection. Police Protection
Flowers in the summer. Christmas lights
For the most part is clean and friendly.
Forward looking progressive growth attitude. Open mindedness.
Forward thinking (planning). Reasonable tax base.
Friendliness, police and fire services
Friendly community with access to many resources.
Friendly people - cultural programs. Free programs.
Friendly professional staff - council members, police, etc. Condition of city parks
General looks. Library. Parks. Bike trails.
Good city manager, bikeways/trailways
Good city services and beautiful parks
Good city services. Good schools
Good condition of homes and businesses. Parks and bike trails.
Good general environment, relatively low crime
Good government. Good services.
Good, honest government. Police/fire.
Good location for most needs, the city is well run
 Good mix of restaurants/shopping and overall congestion lots of kid programs and a great library.
Good place to live
Good police force. Recreational and other programs offered including recycling
Good Police protection. Prompt snow removal.
Good roads. Good schools
Good service. Low taxes.
Good services, close to shopping
Good services, well maintained parks.
Good services. Employees great.
Good streets and well maintained city
Great city parks and trails. Great school system.
Great neighborhoods. Clean
Great retail area. nice neighborhoods
Great services and schools. Country atmosphere
Green space, lack of overcrowding. Transportation access via expressway and airport.
Green space. Library.
Green space. Location

Green spaces - access to lakes, parks and recreation. Public safety - relatively low crime rate.

Green spaces, good schools

Helpful employees. Close by shopping of all types

High schools – both awesome. Spring/fall cleanup program

How clean the city is. Noise control

I like the size of the city, the good school system (God bless the teachers), and the good people of Portage

I like the boulevards, the trees and flowers on Centre St. and Shaver Rd.. All the businesses, doctors, parks, city hall, shopping, all close by all within 5 miles. No need to go to Kalamazoo

I like the look of the city center.

I think one of the best features is the parks and recreation facilities. Portage offers a broad variety to its citizens and neighbors. I also enjoy the number of diversions offered from movies, shopping, restaurants and more

In my neighborhood: low traffic, quiet

It is a very clean city compared to others. Shopping centers are in reach, also medical services are close by and streets are clean.

It is a beautiful city to raise a family. The Portage Public Library.

It is a relatively clean and safe community.

It is a suburban community. School system

It is a clean city. Although it is nice to look at, I think it's not necessary to spend an unreasonable amount of money on landscape.

It is beautiful and you have all the amenities you need in a 3 mile radius.

It is not a Kalamazoo police state! Government helps citizens. Once a police officer recognized my dog blocks away and brought it to me. Would never happen in Kazoo.

Lakes, convenience.

Lakes. Celery Flats.

Lakes and Parks.

Lakes and Parks.

Lakes and Parks.

Lakes. Safe environment

Landscaping along streets - wonderful parks - great.

Landscaping and grooming. Emphasis on education.

Landscaping and plantings. The mall.

Landscaping/ flowers around the city hall, library. Convenient facilities, city staff. Money.

Landscaping, parks and bikeways

Large lighted road signs. Bus services.

Leaf cleanup and upkeep of parks

Leaf pickup. Beautiful flowers and Christmas decorations

Leaf pickup. Snow removal

Less Crime. Good Schools.

Level of city services.

Library

Library

Library and leaf brush pickup

Library and shopping choices.

Library and the senior center

Library and the people working here. Shopping.

Library area and square. Closeness of all the things I use - Senior center, grocery, library, mall, 150 restaurants, etc

Library. Celery Flats Trail.

Library. Small town atmosphere.

Library. The general look of the city

Library. Trails

Local business cleanliness

Location and clean environment.

Location and size.

Location for new business. Parks

Location - midway between Chicago-Detroit. Good schools

Location - near Chicago, Detroit, GR, and Kalamazoo, lakes. Workforce - educated.

Great place to live.

Location. Community

Location. Convenience to our doctors, pharmacy, grocery store and any craft shopping we need.

Location. Library. People. Portage Senior Center.

Location. Other than this I would move back to Kalamazoo.

Love the center area - with all the flowers and lights at the holidays. One of my favorite spots.

Low city taxes and beautiful schools.

Low cost of living. Lack of traffic.

Low crime

Low crime rate, good weather pressure.

Low crime rate. Schools

Low crime rate. Better than average schools

Low crime. Celery Flats

Low property tax, trail system

Low tax base. Quieter, slower living (driving etc)

Lower tax base than Kalamazoo. Less intrusive city government than Kalamazoo.

Lower tax rates. Less government

Lower taxes and nice people.

Lower taxes. Friendly folks.

Main streets are in good condition and encourage the steady flow of traffic. The debate and forensic teams at Portage Northern

Maintaining service and neighborhood stability

Making progress, good place to live

Main street entering the city makes great first impression to first time visitors.

Malls. Stores

Manufacturing. Bikeways

Many trails/paths for walking and lots of sidewalks. Many shops (businesses) in a close area.

Mix of lakes, parks, neighborhood and businesses. Convenience of close shopping and

restaurants.
Natural areas and cleanliness.
Nature preserve and library
Nice environment to live. Schools better.
Neat. Clean
Neighborhoods, city services.
Neighborhoods, safety.
Neighborhoods, schools
Neighborhoods, schools
Neighborhoods - schools
New PCHS and Romence Village stores/shops area
New route for buses (very good). Well kept homes and streets and new businesses
New schools
New schools. New business properties - from tax breaks that encouraged rebuilding.
New work done with the "extra" architecture, streets and sidewalks well maintained and decorated, parks, bike paths
Newsletter-updates, info on city activities. Taxes
Nice city to live in. Seems safe and presentable.
Nice green spaces at many intersections. Trees on new boulevards are lovely.
Nice neighborhoods. Nice parks
Nice parks - good government
Nice safe area to live. Everything is handy
Open areas, clean neighborhoods.
Open community. Schools
Open spaces
Options of services. Community involvement
Outdoor trails for bikes/runners/walkers (and parks). Library – great staff, self check-out, hold service, toddler area
Overall, good and safe community. Good schools
Overall look/feel of neighborhoods and the services Portage offers its residents.
Overall physically pretty area. Able to generate businesses
Overall quality of life. Access to shopping and service.
Park system, trees and flowers
Park system. Annual cleanups
Parks
Parks
Parks
Parks
Parks
Parks
Parks
Parks
Parks
Parks (bike trails), curbside recycling
Parks (Ramona park/beach and bike pathways). Library

Parks and arts
Parks and bike paths.
Parks and bike trails
Parks and bike paths. City ordinance: quality of life and maintenance standards.
Parks and bike paths. Portage District Library
Parks and bike paths. Services (leaf and brush pickup).
Parks and Bike trails - awesome. City newsletter - excellent communication.
Parks and bikeways. Availability of convenient restaurants, groceries, retail
Parks and city maintenance
Parks and nature trails.
Parks and outdoor activities.
Parks and recreation opportunities. Natural beauty - houses and businesses blend in with nature rather than over take it.
Parks and recreation - trails, parks, festivals, entertainment. Homeowner services, leaf pickup
Parks and Recreation (softball). Police/Fire
Parks and Recreation. Services like recycling etc.
Parks and Recreation. Brush/leaf pickup
Parks and Recreation. Public library and senior center
Parks and Recreation. Appearance of main thoroughfares.
Parks and recreational activity. Schools.
Parks and schools
Parks and schools
Parks and schools.
Parks and shopping
Parks and shopping areas
Parks and shopping centers.
Parks and Shopping
Parks and street maintenance. Police attitude and professionalism.
Parks and the bike trails.
Parks and trails/bikeways. Tree City
Parks and trails. Police/fire
Parks and trails.
Parks and trails. Brush pickup.
Parks and trails. Shopping.
Parks and trailways
Parks and very clean.
Parks and water
Parks are great. Bike friendly
Parks, bike and walking trails. Entry to Portage is now very nice. The landscaping etc. has really added to the beauty of the city.
Parks, bike paths, recreation, library.
Parks, Bike and walking paths
Parks, Bike trails. The various cleanup programs: brush, spring cleanup and hazardous waste.
Parks. City center, cemetery.

Parks – great recreation programs
Parks/floral displays on Shaver Rd. Snow removal.
Parks including, bike way. Library
Parks, library
Parks, library
Parks, Mall
Parks, police patrols in trailer park where I live
Parks, proximity to shopping, recreation, highway.
Parks, schools
Parks, shopping, and some neighborhoods.
Parks, streets and some how schools.
Parks, trails system, dedication funding. Schools
Parks, walk paths. Police/Fire
Parks. Library.
Parks. Lots of trees and wooded areas.
Parks. Natural Areas. Schools.
Parks. Roads.
Parks. School system
Parks. Schools
Parks. Schools
Parks. Schools
Parks. Schools
Parks. Schools/library
Parks. Senior Center.
Parks, Shopping.
Parks. Shopping/restaurants
Parks. The trees and flowers
Parks. Trailways
Parks. Trees
Parks. Walking/biking paths
Parkways. Trails. Schools!
Peaceful, progressive.
People and the lakes.
People and the schools
People are friendly. Police, fire, and public services are very good.
People that live here tend to take care of their property. Portage has everything right here,
no need to go to Kalamazoo.
People - we all try to get along. Shopping - no need to go elsewhere.
People. Location
People. Trail System
Planned growth. Senior center and library
Pleasant community. Lower taxes than Kalamazoo
Police and City office employees
Police and fire
Police and fire

Police and fire
Police and fire
Police and fire
Police and fire
Police and fire
Police and fire
Police and fire. Great city employees.
Police and fire protection. Schools.
Police protection. Parks
Police protection. Quality care of life that exists in Portage and surrounding areas.
Portage Creek, Bicentennial Park, abundant, retail, and restaurants, flowers at the library,
good reputation.
Portage has a great library that is well used by all. Bike paths
Pride in neighborhoods by home owners. Ordinances enforced
Proximity to other things (WMU/Kalamazoo College, Lake Michigan shoreline, Air Zoo,
etc). Nice, quiet neighborhoods
Public lake access/landings and beaches. Bike and walkways, state land access
Public safety. Clean
Public Safety. Parks and schools
Public sensitive government officials. City Hall services.
Public services, schools - though I think it strange they are not involved in this survey.
Public services. Response to emergencies (Extra brush pick-ups)
Quality of Life - good place to raise family. Great schools
Quality of life. Schools and parks
Quality of living
Quality of personnel at City Hall. Quality of personnel at Police
Quality of service provided and opportunities for involvement
Quality of the school system. Multitude of lakes within and near the city
Quiet, friendly, neighborhoods, convenience to shopping areas. Good city services
provided by polite city employees, officers.
Quiet neighborhoods. Decent shopping.
Reasonable tax. Social infrastructure
Recreational opportunities. Nice size; good shopping areas' safe
Recreational opportunities. School system
Recreational parks. Clean city.
Recreational Space (Parks and Bike paths)
Recycle and bike trails
Relatively safe area. Good schools
Reputation of good schools, which is a factor for resale. Location is great for access to
locations at all 4 points of compass.
Response to complaints. Police control of Oakland traffic
Restaurants and easy access
Restaurants. Easy Shopping.
Retail and Bike trails. Cleanliness and City services

Retail center. Good neighborhoods.
Roads, bike/hike ways (not the bike/lanes in the road).
Roads, trails, PCC
Rubbish and trash pickup. Close to shopping
Run, walk, bike trails. Variety of city parks.
Safe and clean environment.
Safe, clean
Safe clean
 Safe, clean area to live. Not congested with good access to lakes, recreation, airport, etc.
(good overall layout)
Safe, clean environment
Safe community with great schools. Excellent library
Safe community. Good level of public services.
Safe environment. Good school system
Safe neighborhoods, convenient commercial district
Safe place to live. Clean, good looking city
Safe, people
Safe place to raise a family. Good schools.
Safe, pleasant living environment. All municipal services
Safe streets. Trails, easy access, lots to do
Safety and education
Safety and neatness
Safety and Schools.
Safety – low crime
Safety, Manuscript services
Safety of neighborhoods, shopping. Family oriented.
Safety. Clean – attractive
Safety. Continued growth
Safety. Low taxes.
Safety. Many parks and green areas, trails and tennis courts.
School system and location to Kalamazoo
School system, safe environment.
Schools
Schools
Schools
Schools
Schools
Schools
Schools
Schools
Schools
Schools
Schools
Schools.
Schools, activities available

Schools, activities available
Schools (although football fields are a joke!!!)
Schools and area
Schools and beautiful family friendly parks that are used by many.
Schools and Celery Flats, walk/bike paths
Schools and city services
Schools and cleanliness
Schools and community services
Schools and education for kids. Bike paths/parks
Schools and generally good city government
Schools and leaf/ brush pickups
Schools and municipal sense of doing a good job.
Schools and neighborhoods
Schools and overall nice looking city
Schools and parks
Schools and parks
Schools and parks
Schools and parks
Schools and parks
Schools and parks
Schools and parks
Schools and parks
Schools and parks
Schools and public safety (police and fire protection)
Schools and recreation areas
Schools and stores
Schools and trails
Schools and walking pathways.
Schools are great. City services are great
Schools are great. Location - close to WMU, events.
Schools. Bike paths, parks
Schools, biking trails.
Schools, community activities
Schools. Community services - library, senior center, outdoor activities, etc.
Schools, conditions of neighborhoods
Schools, especially Angling Rd. The fire dept.
Schools. General feeling of safety/open space/ parks.
Schools, good people and community
Schools, good property values
Schools. Green spaces – however, those on West Centre are disappearing at an alarming rate, while large vacant buildings remain near the city center.
Schools, housing
Schools in spite of the school board. Police and fire protection.
Schools. Low crime.
Schools. Neighborhood safety and attractiveness

Schools, overall appearance of Portage.

Schools, parks

Schools, police

Schools, police and fire

Schools. Quality of housing

Schools - ratings by percentiles recently in the Gazette reflect this. Aesthetics - floral displays at city hall, library, etc. and resultant pride of citizens Services rendered by city hall, P.S.C. and library and Police/Fire.

Schools, retail district

Schools, safe clean environment

Schools, senior center

Schools. Sense of community.

Schools, shopping

Schools, shopping

Schools, shopping

Schools, shopping, restaurants

Schools, streets

Schools, streets

Schools. White population

Schools. A nice sized city.

Schools. Beauty of city hall area and at parks

Schools. Bike trails

Schools. Bike trails and parks

Schools. Bike Trails

Schools. Bikeways/trails

Schools. Caring community. Neat, good streets, lots of parks community

Schools. Celery Flats, bike paths

Schools. Celery Flats/bike trails

Schools. Churches

Schools. City bikeways

Schools. City Government.

Schools. City is well maintained.

Schools. City services.

Schools. City services.

Schools. cleanliness

Schools. cleanliness.

Schools. community atmosphere.

Schools. Community.

Schools. Diverse businesses.

Schools. Family orientated.

Schools. Fire Dept.

Schools. General Appearance of the Area

Schools. Generally a safe city to live in.

Schools. Good city services.

Schools. Good environment.
Schools. Good neighborhoods.
Schools. Good recreational facilities.
Schools. Good Roads.
Schools. Great parks
Schools. Green spaces
Schools. Lack of crime
Schools. Library
Schools. low violent crime rate
Schools. Low taxes
Schools. Lower taxes.
Schools. Most people love Portage and are supportive
Schools. Nice neighborhoods.
Schools. Opportunities (dining, recreation, employment, etc.)
Schools. Parks
Schools. Parks and trails
Schools. Parks.
Schools. Parks.
Schools. Parks.
Schools. People
Schools. People
Schools. People – however somewhat concerned about decline
Schools. Police fire protection.
Schools. Portage as a whole. A great city.
Schools. Progress
Schools. Public parks
Schools. Quality housing at reasonable cost of living
Schools. Responsive City government.
Schools. Safe community overall?
Schools. Safe home environment for children
Schools. Safe homes and streets.
Schools. safety
Schools. Safety.
Schools. Safety- although with neighborhoods changing feeling safe is also changing.
Schools. Senior center and library
Schools. Shopping.
Schools. Tax base – Westnedge corridor/Romence/Centre/Oakland-Centre
Schools. The shopping and restaurants.
Schools. Family-friendly city (plus we have a great library).
Schools. City parks are all well kept up.
Senior Center.
Senior Center and fire department.
Senior Center, city parks
Senior Center. The Mall being close by.

Senior center. Schools
Senior services provided. Condition/appearance of city.
Service and overall appearance
Services
Services and appearance of city bikes and walking trails.
Services and people. Best Michigan location to love (Friendly people- all)
Services and the Community as a fine area to live
Services are good and the city does a great job with flowers, trees, parks. Thanks.
Services, bike trails and paths
 Services have not been cut back much in spite of the economy. The city addresses
 problems speedily and effectively.
Services. Small-town feeling.
Shopping and bike trails
Shopping and restaurants.
Shopping areas.
Shopping areas along Westnedge, public schools
Shopping convenience and park parking. Schools.
Shopping convenience, good restaurants.
Shopping, nice neighborhoods, general appearance of improved public streets.
Shopping.
Shops and fire department
Size and people
Size, critical services
Size. Friendliness of residents
Size, low crime
Size. Close proximity to major university
Size. It's a safe place to live.
Small city well organized. Presence of Secretary of State office. No casino
Small, high quality merchants. Clean.
Small safe town. Hub – good location with many services for families
Small town feel - neighborhood
Small town feel. Fairly stable population and economy.
Small town feel. Always neat and clean. Repairs made promptly
Snow removal and traffic control
Social programs for seniors and kids
Spring and leaf pickups. Snow removal
Spring cleanup. Fall leaf pickup
Spring cleanup. Low taxes
Spring/fall pickup, snow plowing
Spring pickup, household items. Library and PSC
Stores are close
Streets are in reasonably good shape. The majority of houses and buildings are in good repair
Stryker and Phizer
The airport. The schools

The bike trails and walkways. You don't have to drive very far for goods or services you need. The care of landscaping and plantings. The Mall.

The community has a lot to offer its citizens, culturally, recreationally, etc. Portage is a well-maintained community with great schools.

The fact that the police are so visible in our neighborhoods is comforting and the streets are well maintained and visually attractive.

The good people, in businesses, city hall, etc. It make me sad to see all those for sale signs and people moving away. Our town is a beautiful town to live in. But watch the money- don't force people out because of high prices. Get the businesses to help advertise good sales to bring in more revenue. Give them a push and encourage them to hire people. Give them incentives by offering an amount for each person.

The lakes and parks

The number of lakes available. The school system is excellent.

The outreach center, and the police station.

The quality of the families and neighborhoods The quality of education The green spaces around town.

The several housing developments which bring in tax monies, which should give existing residents tax breaks. Cleanliness.

The streets are clean and the stores along Westnedge are in relatively good condition. It is evident the owners/managers take pride in keeping their stores attractive. I especially liked looking down Oakland going south from Milham to Centre. One worker did all the brick work along the side for a wonderful curb appeal. The Gazette featured the parks, some of them we did not know about. Convenient for out of town shoppers on Westnedge at Christmas. The Portage library is also my favorite especially wonderful at Christmas w/ decorations and lights. Street signs are where they can be seen. The roundabout at 12th st. will take some getting used to. I can see the need for it but it is confusing. The Gazette ran an article about it but I think it would be helpful to run it again.

The trail system for bikes and pedestrian. The parks.

Traffic engineer does a great job keeping traffic flowing! Thanks! I brag about Portage's excellent traffic engineer though we don't even know him.

Traffic improvements, parks

Trail system and look and feel.

Trails and bikeways. Inviting boulevards entering city and green spaces

Trails and cleanliness of the city in general.

Trails and recycling

Trails, convenience of stores.

Trails, library

Trails. City parks.

Trails. Commercial corridor (Westnedge)

Trails. Curbside services

Trailways, Parks

Tree city. Schools

Trees and flowers and conditions of most neighborhoods. Police and fire protection

Trees and green spaces and bicycle paths. I feel safe here.

Trees, close to schools and work, highway.

Trees, Trails, Library

Trees, upkeep of roads

Upkeep of the parks and streets. Involvement of children in school activities.

Variety of community offerings for all ages, quality of public education

Variety of services and bike trails

Visibility of public safety. Variety of commercial shops/restaurants

Walking/bike/nature trails. All the shopping and dining choices.

Walking trails and streets.

Way city is planned. Level of taxes

Well kept homes for the most part. Great Library.

Well kept neighborhoods. Accessibility to shops and services

Well kept parks and streets. You are endeavoring to keep up the streets.

Well run by officials. Communicates well with citizens.

Well-kept city; schools

Well-run city government. Good medical and shopping facilities

When contacted, follow through on complaints. Spring cleanup.

Wonderful trails, I use every day between spring and fall. I walk from Centre and Kilgore and love every minute of it. We are lucky to have the two high schools that we have even though we don't have any kids there anymore.

33. Looking at the next ten years, what do you think is the single most important problem facing Portage?

Ability to provide services and keep taxes affordable. Otherwise, people will move to lower taxes for same or better city services

Acceptable level of services with reduced revenue.

Affordable housing.

Affording services.

Ageing housing stock. Job growth does not offer wages for buying houses and raising children

Ageing population. Businesses moving away from the area.

Aging population

Aging population on fixed retirement income unable to keep up with increasing taxes and cost of living

Air quality.

Allowing too much construction in what should be wild life areas

An influx of minorities

Any merger with Kalamazoo will cost Portage residents taxes and less services. Need more sidewalks so children can walk to school. The never-ending special bond issues and taxes to support this, that and whatever. Eliminate the pay to play (sports, club teams, and band).

Attract high quality (jobs) employers

Attracting business to raise the tax base.

Attracting businesses to increase the tax base

Attracting more business

Attracting new businesses to create more jobs.

Attracting new businesses and therefore their employees. The new schools will really help

Attracting new residents to help maintain home values.

Attracting new residents to maintain the excellence in the schools

Attracting white collar businesses

Availability of good jobs within a reasonable commute in service and manufacturing

Avoid consolidation of services! That brings Kalamazoo's problem to Portage.

Avoid foreclosures - keep our houses occupied.

Avoid property tax increase. Not letting the state do away with the business property tax

Balance of taxes/services

Balanced budget while keeping services at the current level.

Balanced budget with maintaining emergency and other services

Balanced budget without taking away current services.

Balanced budget.

Balancing city budget - may need to raise taxes.

Balancing demand of residents, while recognizing the importance of business/economic growth in local community.

Balancing higher taxes against cutting services - that's a problem everywhere, not just Portage.

Be able to provide services

Being able to continue quality schools

Being able to keep some land as nature preserves.

Being able to collect enough taxes to finance the operations of the city. As long as home values go down, this will be the challenge

Being fiscally responsible without reducing services.

Blighted housing and businesses.

Bringing in more businesses.

Brown fields. We need to reuse not build new, fix up, look at the new strip malls that have gone up and are now empty like the one on Portage just south of H&B market.

Budget

Budget.

Budget

Budget concerns – using tax dollars wisely

Budget cuts from state.

Budget – how to maintain current level of service without raising taxes.

Budgeting – matching expenses to potentially lower income while maintaining services at a high level

Budget - We don't need all of these boulevards and sprinkler systems and flowers.

Building a downtown. Maintaining/Retaining jobs

Business growth/jobs

Business growth. Keeping and attracting.

Business growth. Starting to think we are becoming land locked

Business promotion and job growth to support the community and public services.

Businesses closing.

Businesses leaving the city and state

Businesses operating in residential neighborhoods. Maintaining city services. Recruiting industry/ business.

Cell phones that are allowed in school

Changing demographics – higher % of poorer, older, minorities, etc

Changing demographics and increased poverty level. We are becoming an older community with older homes, and we need to keep our community young and fresh to attract young, professional families.

Changing tax base due to changing aging population, and commercial base. The appearance of Portage has deteriorated somewhat over the past 10 years. It runs the risk of slowly losing its upper middle class appearance, which made Portage attractive in the 1st place.

City council

City council. City manager

City growth

City income. Decline in school income

Cleaning up the meth manufacturers.

Closing of businesses.

Collaboration of services

Commercial growth. Stable residential home prices.

Commercial tax base. Empty commercial buildings.

Compete with Kalamazoo

Competing with Kazoo for new growth with their grants for college

Condition of abandoned or foreclosed homes.

Congestion on roads as more businesses come into the area.

Considering the economic issues facing the country, crime will rise - we need to keep a solid police force.

Consolidation of services for political reasons rather than a real benefit.

Continue to offer high quality education in light of the changing economic environment and school funding.

Continue to provide services that citizens are used to without raising taxes out of sight.

Continued quality of services.

Continued services at today's level without large tax rate increases.

Continuing business development and a friendlier business environment (e.g. Teacup controversy)

Control development. Both business and housing.

Controlling costs.

Controlling costs and services.

Convenient housing for seniors as that population grows larger.

Conversion away from personal property tax or Pfizer clean up.

Cost containment - Spending for necessary services versus amenities and unnecessary recreational programs.

Cost of schools, particularly the MEA

Cost of services – sewer water snow etc

Costly upkeep of all city property, like boulevards, entrance to city lots, city lands. Too much money put into buying property for city. Parks budget should be cut 50%.

Creating a stable job base.

Creating jobs without taxing people out of the city.

Crime

Crime

Crime and gangs moving into Portage.

Crime – theft, home invasions

Crime.

Crime. Pit bulls

Current level of livability.

Cutting programs such as leaf/brush pickup, many of us have no place to put this stuff if we didn't have pickup.

De-forestation by utilities and new construction in unnecessary places.

Dealing with senior citizens needs.

Decline in home values and increased foreclosures.

Decline in property by owners – more renters of homes rather than owners – similar decline to Kalamazoo over past 20 years

Decline in the value of private homes.

Decline of neighborhoods. 5 yrs. ago I would never have thought there would be a shooting in my area. Now trying to figure out if I need to move and if I can afford it.

Declining full time job opportunities.
Declining funding for education.
Declining property values.
Declining property values.
Declining revenue and increasing cost of services
Declining state revenue sharing and preserving essential services.
Declining with the results of the terrible economy.
Decrease in home values. Residents not maintaining their homes.
Decrease in home values
Decrease in property value causing reduced taxes, less funds for the city to operate with.
Decreasing home values
Decreasing home values.
Deer- get rid of them.
Deteriorating older neighborhoods. Loss of green space - busier streets.
Deterioration of older neighborhoods.
Diversity in businesses
Do not allow complete deforestation by developers!
Dropping and loss of income - personal and business.
Drug awareness and control.
Drug traffic under control in neighborhood.
Drugs
Drugs
Drugs
Drugs
Drugs and drug usage
Drugs, especially in the middle and high schools
East-west roads going across southern Portage. Currently there is nothing south of
Centre, other than Osterhout
Economic development
Economic development to increase tax base and jobs.
Economic environment.
Economic opportunity - jobs
Economy
Economy
Economy
Economy
Economy
Economy
Economy
Economy
Economy and its effect on tax base and crime
Economy and jobs
Economy and taxes.
Economy - big employers are not growing

Economy - big employers are not growing
Economy - maintaining good services with the lowest possible taxes.
Economy - the value of our homes and property and jobs leaving the area.
Economy, which effects jobs which effects tax revenue
Economy. For the most part, neighborhoods appear safe. Could use more shopping choices other than Westnedge. That area is becoming more congested.
Education - Having to do more with less money - Better technology - better teachers.
Effective cost cutting and minimal tax increase while maintaining services
Employment
Employment.
Employment
Employment
Employment
Employment
Employment
Employment i.e. population increase
Employment opportunities in Portage
Empty Buildings
Empty homes and foreclosures. Lack of improvements to PNHS school buildings
Empty, out of business buildings, which turn into eyesores
Empty store fronts
Energy consumption - lighting, fuel, etc.
Erosion of school quality
Excessive new commercial construction
Expanding tax base/economic development.
Falling property values.
Family friendly programs being cut.
 Figuring out a new growth model, improving an aging infrastructure, avoiding any further loss of jobs and economic diversity of the area.
Fill vacant commercial properties. Drug violations.
Filling empty store fronts and pretending its taxes are low.
 Filling vacant commercial property. We overbuilt retail, for example, the new Sam's club that ruined Romence Parkway. The old Sam's Club is still vacant, along with K-mart and a host of other commercial spaces.
Finances
Finding revenue to maintain services.
 Fiscal sustainability of schools and services. May need to consider 'right to work' at city level and replace union positions with highly qualified non-union personnel
Flight - not a diverse community.
Flow of traffic in some areas of the city.
Foreclosed homes
Foreclosed homes, job loss
Foreclosures
Foreclosures

Foreclosures and maintaining property values and tax base

Funding

Funding and revenue for continued services.

Funds to maintain city and services.

Generating adequate revenues to maintain current services.

Get rid of city employees who make our lives bad. The permit department is very rude.

Getting city government out of providing so many services – government in general is to provide level playing field and that is pretty much it. Private business can and should take care of most services the city provides

Getting people in city hall to work together and not always having problems with the school board. Paying out the money for fired superintendent was the most stupid thing this city ever did.

Getting people to believe again in the council. I'm ashamed of Portage at the present time with so much dissention.

Getting rid of unused commercial properties e.g., Kmart. make a plan to get rid of!

Getting taxpayers to pay more for second rate services. I called about the street sweepers and was told no money in the budget. Maybe you should fix the budget. What are we paying for?

Ghetto families moving from Kalamazoo into older homes in the district. White flight will result.

Good jobs – not retail related. Fix the roads please!

Good teachers, keeping education standards high.

Government consolidation

Growing the tax base

Growth

Growth

Growth

Growth

Growth

Growth

Growth

Growth and expansion for current population! Due to great school systems and dedicated city personnel.

Growth and infrastructure changes to accommodate

Growth and zoning vs. quantity and cost of living (taxes)

Having to cut police and fire protection. Citizens lack of support for schools because of their income.

High property taxes

High tax rates.

High taxes

High taxes causing people to move out of Portage or not move in

High unemployment, lack of job opportunities

Higher taxes while reducing services

Holding down costs

Holding down costs in all areas, especially to retiring employees who work short term,

this could offer additional funds for other areas - police, fire

Holding down property taxes.

Home decay in some neighborhoods.

Home foreclosure/declining property cycle

Home/neighborhood upkeep and streets

Home values

Homeless people

Housing vs. tax base

How to convince residents they can do with less - we don't have personal finances to keep paying more and more. The only other option is cuts which folks don't like either. But you can't have it both ways.

How to replace the tax revenue when Pfizer closes the Portage manufacturing facility.

I believe that more effort needs to be placed on improving our airport services/prices.

Education should not suffer, so more input at the state level to not lose funding.

I can see a slight downward trend in enforcing neighborhood cleanliness, pride of home appearance and neatness. Standards are not maintained and are allowed to decline. Perhaps we need more neighborhood associations.

I think some of the streets could be improved. Angling Road is finally getting done.

I think some of the streets could be improved. I see that Angling Road is finally getting done.

I want to see those for sale signs gone and young kids walking past my house and the flowers we plant yearly. I would like to see more annual giving and more help for people in need.

I worry about decreased educational opportunities in the schools.

Image - kids hanging out by soccer field smoking in large groups between adult ed classes. I drive down Milham and feel like I'm in Kalamazoo. Car radios booming - sometimes terrible language.

Improper growth planning. Building out and not up, losing green space

Improve roads

Improving our city and streets. Providing and preparing our young people for the challenges they will face

Inability to maintain excellent service with a diminishing tax base.

Increase in traffic - city busses - need industry - no more walking and bike trails - reduce city vehicles by 5 to 10 percent and increase mileage and age before replacement

Increase of property taxes. The property taxes keep going up, but the value of the property keeps falling.

Increased density.

Increased taxes

Increased taxes

Increased taxes

Increased taxes

Increased taxes - Over populated - I don't like all the new building and housing. There are no more open spaces which is a shame.

Increased traffic flow.

Increasing employment opportunities in Portage

Increasing opportunity for higher paying jobs
 Increasing or at least keeping the tax base that we presently have.
 Increasing taxes and reduced services.
 Infrastructure
 Infrastructure maintenance - roads, sidewalks, storm drains, etc...
 Infrastructure - roads city buildings etc.
 Infrastructure to facilitate growth.
 Infrastructure.
 Integration or lack of it.
 Intergovernmental cooperation without lowering our standards.
 Intergovernmental cooperation. Maintaining current standards
 It is land-locked for housing
 It may become more like a big city and lose its comfort zone
 Job growth (or lack of)
 Job loss
 Job opportunities.
 Jobs
 Jobs
 Jobs
 Jobs
 Jobs
 Jobs
 Jobs
 Jobs and standard of living – residents keeping up with needed taxes.
 Jobs, empty houses.
 Jobs, keep and getting new jobs in the area
 Jobs, keeping the schools ahead of other communities. And yes, people consider the athletic departments
 Jobs, property tax too high.
 Jobs to support the homeowners.
 Jobs. People need jobs to support schools. Keeping the streets in good repair is an ongoing problem. That includes snow removal. Keeping up heavy equipment repaired and of course fuel is very expensive. We had excellent snow removal this past winter but in all areas cuts have to be made. Right now the street arrows are getting difficult to see. For those not familiar with the streets and the turn lanes with heavy traffic at certain times it becomes difficult to change lanes. Portage is a beautiful city. I have not missed my home town having lived here a little over nine years. There is so much we can do and shopping is just a matter of a few blocks.
 Jobs. We need decent paying jobs in this city that people can work. There are a lot of people willing to put in some hard work, if there were any opportunities.
 Keep business in Portage
 Keep employers low taxes for businesses and I'm a democrat.
 Keep expenses in line
 Keep good services such as snow removal and repairing streets
 Keep growth down. Maintaining a somewhat green space/rural feel
 Keep low income and poverty from moving in, maintaining reputation of schools and

beauty of the city.

Keep or lower taxes so that seniors can afford to keep their houses.

Keep our schools at their best!

Keep Pfizer in Portage.

Keep property taxes in check

Keep spending low.

Keep stores we already have open or replace as soon as one moves out. More industry for more jobs and to raise more money for our community.

Keep taxes reasonable with decreased home values and avoid raising taxes on homes that have decreased value

Keep the school system as strong as it is in light of reduced state funding. It's why we chose Portage

Keep the schools academic levels as high as they have been

Keep up with the growth of business and population

Keep Westnedge retail thriving

Keeping a strong school system with well paid staff that want to stay. This is threatened by current attitudes toward teachers and state aid cuts focused on schools.

Keeping and bringing in businesses.

Keeping as is

Keeping costs down and services up. Maintaining and/or improving schools. The superintendent issues were very bad, expensive, and primarily the board's issues.

Keeping good police/fire. Employment, keep approving employers requests Keeping low crime rates

Keeping infrastructure sound

Keeping it a safe place for family.

Keeping jobs in Portage - tax base

Keeping people here, getting people to move here. Portage is costly.

Keeping Pfizer here. Keep taxes low for small business to survive

Keeping Pfizer in town

Keeping Portage schools competitive with surrounding districts

Keeping property taxes down.

Keeping residents in our wonderful city with this economy. We need to keep bigger businesses and bring more in to keep the residents in Portage in the future. It is hard to keep a city running without tax payers wanting to live in it.

Keeping schools financed.

Keeping smaller town feel while continuing to grow

Keeping two high schools open. May need to consolidate to one to save money.

Keeping up with the Jones - i.e. grand Rapids recycling program. I have to organize all my items just to get it all to fit!

Lack of business growth with upgrades. I drive down Portage daily to work and on my route the number of run-down businesses are a blight. This includes the eyesore on Centre blocking the beautiful new Portage Central High School.

Lack of diversity.

Lack of funds to maintain services.

Lack of funds due to the economy.
Lack of job growth to support neighborhood housing prices.
Lack of strong leadership in city management
Leaders who think before they spend.
Less police
Level of city services during economically stressful times.
Level of services provided by the city in the face of our current economic condition
Level of taxation and street repair
Local government surviving with our current legislature.
Losing tax base. Companies closing, job loss, etc...
Loss of jobs and resulting tax base
Loss of natural areas
Loss of revenue will have an impact on the city's two best features
Loss of revenue. However, we pay a lot of taxes already and don't want to see them raised
Loss of revenues.
Loss of tax base
Loss of tax revenue from declining property value.
Low taxes while providing necessary services such as police/fire
Maintain a safe community
Maintain and improve infrastructure
Maintain city programs without raising taxes
Maintain commercial/industrial tax base.
Maintain good services with less money coming from state and federal sources.
Maintain infrastructure and promote commercial investment
Maintain its beauty
Maintain services and improvement in problem areas
Maintain services without increasing taxes.
Maintain services without increasing taxes.
Maintain services without increasing taxes.
Maintain services without significantly raising taxes
Maintain taxes and services
Maintain the quality we have right now.
Maintaining and improving streets, buildings and controlling growth of trees and appearances
Maintaining excellent schools. Keep up road improvements.
Maintaining funding with a poor economy.
Maintaining good services with housing prices falling and lower state support! A real challenge.
Maintaining its attractiveness to new business while retaining companies currently operating.
 Maintaining moderate property tax levels. Attracting new manufacturing businesses,
combating neighborhood flight.
Maintaining older communities.
 Maintaining or improving the business base in order to support the economic stability of
the community - i.e. keeping Stryker, Pfizer and other major employers while attracting new
businesses.
Maintaining or increasing support for Portage public schools.

Maintaining Portage commercial corridor (empty storefronts, buildings is deleterious)

Maintaining present services

Maintaining property tax levels while the city faces declining state revenue

Maintaining services and keeping taxes in check. I believe people will leave Portage as they have Kalamazoo if our tax base gets out of hand.

Maintaining services while population and employment decreases. You need to relax some of the city's regulations on small businesses.

Maintaining services with reduced funding, paying off debt.

Maintaining the quality of the school system.

Maintaining the residential areas and maintaining or lowering taxes.

Maintaining what we have

Making sure to stay current, up to date, clean - making it one of the most desired places to live

Managing continued growth and not letting buildings stay empty (e.g closed businesses) - I'm not sure what to do about the latter, but it makes more sense to me to use usable space rather than build new structures for so many businesses.

Managing services in a manner that minimize the increase in taxes.

Matching revenue with services.

Mayor and mayor pro tem need to be replaced.

Money

Money

Money

Money

Money

Money

Money

Money and taxes

Money and taxes

Money – via taxes, suspect downturn in people paying property taxes. Cut services like fire, police, and snow plowing salt. The salt is so heavy it rots out my car. Too much salt

Money for education

Money for schools

Money for schools

Money, money, money

Money needed for operations without hardship to residents.

Money - to keep level high .

Money, too much spending

Money. City needs to do better job looking at ways to save money, like they did when they privatized utilities. Other departments can be outsourced, or maybe city should combine their own departments and make better use of their employees.

More business along Westnedge and jobs.

More parks. Snow clean close to Portage edge.

More small/medium businesses closing, making city lose more tax revenue forcing city to cut services and/or raise taxes to the point that people will leave the city.

More things going on at the bandshell. More activities at Celery Flats

More traffic

Natural environment - increasingly severe weather response, with quality trails to save transportation needs without using gasoline.

Need large companies to open to increase tax revenue.

Need to build a strong sense of community. I think being a good neighbor by looking out for your neighbor, volunteering in your community, and living with Godly intentions is very important

Need to create business friendly environment so industrial employers want to move into city.

Needs more cultural diversity, including retail/entertainment. There is little for married couple to do here on a date night, card night – dance hall (non-saloon) – intellectual stimulation.

Needs more manufacturing - retail-heavy.

Neighborhood changes and people moving out.

Neighborhood quality as a result of declining or reduced home prices

Neighborhoods and house foreclosures

Neighborhoods when people keep moving out.

Neighborhoods. Decreasing transient housing (too much)

No new industry coming to town.

Not enough senior apartments

Old age

Our huge schools and people moving out, not in. Heat, air and upkeep will be huge.

Over building of businesses. Many empty buildings are available.

Over development

Over development

Over development for real estate only

Over development not funding the things that make Portage special i.e. parks, lakes, other recreational.

Over expanding – sorry to see us losing the wooded area for Greenspire shops on Centre

Over growth of businesses along with vacant buildings for commercial use. Currently see it on Mall Drive and Centre and Shaver

Overpopulation

Overpopulation, house costs, traffic.

Paying for services without raising taxes

People are losing jobs and their homes - added pressure for residents still here. We also need programs to reduce energy costs - I'd be willing to pay more to fund these programs - I would also like more energy carriers in area to drive competitive costs.

People leaving and lack of employers in the area.

Police protection.

Police response to calls very slow or non-existent. Takes snow melting away before we get plowed!

Pollution.

Population and traffic plus narrow roads.

Population growth

Population growth

Population re-education and condition of home re: maintenance

Population to support the new schools.

Portage as a Tree City.

Portage does not have a downtown. All activities are centered downtown Kalamazoo - not enough restaurants and small boutiques like Kalamazoo offers.

Portage needs to be a more favorable for a growing family because Portage is getting older.

Portage police dept. should get together on teenagers because they broke into my home and another home after mine. The police knew who the teenagers were, no big deal as far as the police were concerned. Well it was a big deal to me: I did all I could try to get them put in jail. I would like to get some feed back on this problem. Is this to change? Thank you.

Position that all taxes are evil and must be eliminated, thereby reducing the quality of our schools, roads, police and fire protection, environmental safeguards and other function, that are proper and necessary domain of government and cannot be entrusted to profit-seeking companies
Positive economic balance.

Possibility of higher taxes if state or federal funding goes away. Need new business to come into town to help with taxes.

Possibility of lost or decreased services.

Property taxes.

Property taxes

Property taxes are already much higher than most states.

Property taxes are high and pushes people to move elsewhere.

Property taxes continue to rise and many buildings will be vacant.

Property value/appearance of bank-repossessed homes.

Property values stable

Property values

Property values.

Property values. Keeping drug activity under control

Providing current services as population ages and companies downsize.

Protecting our police and firemen and keeping away from Kalamazoo.

Providing services while decreasing costs

Providing services without increasing taxes.

Public services - snow, roads, curbs. Taxes

Quality jobs - minimum wage retail jobs will not support the retailers themselves, so eventually even they will be gone. Top priority need to be attracting technology and manufacturing jobs.

Quality of life with the challenges of taxes and maintaining services.

Quality of neighborhoods.

Quality of schools/teachers despite budget cuts.

Quality of schools - better teachers are needed. Need extra curricular activities at lower cost. Better football field with turf so more events can be held there to help school organizations (band, etc) raise money.

Quality of schools

Quality of schools

Quality services in this economy

Quantity/quality of services without tax increases. Maintaining the quality of neighborhoods

Raising taxes.

Roads and traffic (Oakland fiasco being an example)

Roads and traffic

Roads and traffic flow; stores going out of business and blight

Roads and Traffic.

Roads in good repair.

Roads, Westnedge, problem kids running at night.

Room for growth

Rules in a neighborhood only apply to certain people.

Salary and benefits costs of city employees.

School funding/quality

Schools

Schools

Schools

Schools

Schools

Schools (if people stop picking on the teachers union and concentrate on education), there is a lot of trust in the community. This is very important.

Schools and services with a slowing revenue stream

Schools are at a great risk due to budget - we need teachers...

Schools – budget cuts are worsening jobs and programs eliminated

Schools needing more money!

Schools not as good as years ago, and no longer attracts new people to move here.

Schools. Encourage and help young people to stay and fund jobs.

Schools. Jobs.

Schools. Need to keep up innovations and quality.

Schools. Need to keep up innovations and quality.

Service levels without raising taxes.

Services

Services

Services we are enjoying now

Services without tax increase

Services with reduced revenue

Services with shrinking budget

Sharing water with Kalamazoo. I pay taxes to Portage. Why not water services?

Snow removal

South Westnedge traffic

Stable tax rate while maintaining city infrastructure

Status quo

Status quo in face of our economy.

Stop letting new buildings go up and start to use the buildings that are there. It makes the city look like something you find at the bottom of our shoes. When we are walking through the city parks stop putting in roundabouts. We don't like them and it costs a lot of money to put them in.

Stop wasting money in areas that are not needed, fix roads good and keep them fixed.

hire companies that do good, quality work, instead of companies that do poor quality work.

Street repair

Streets

Streets and roadways in good repair. Safety.

Support for senior center facilities, growth, program.

Tax base

Tax base (shrinking)

Tax base. Needs of low income people who live in Portage. Transportation

Tax breaks for senior

Tax breaks to big business and paying for maintenance of roads.

Tax increase makes it hard if retired.

Tax increases

Tax inflow

Tax money received vs. what is to be spent. Don't raise taxes - cut programs.

Tax people too much, since there no job good paying jobs.

Tax rate and services

Tax rate is much too high.

Tax rate. Millage is too high. Should not be raising assessments every year. Value of houses actually goes down but taxes still go up.

Tax revenue

Tax revenue

Tax revenue usage

Taxes

Taxes

Taxes

Taxes

Taxes

Taxes

Taxes

Taxes

Taxes

Taxes and budget cuts.

Taxes and maintaining quality programs and services.

Taxes and property losing value

Taxes and services.

Taxes are too high and you use only the highest valued homes to base the taxing rate for the rest of the homes in Portage. You have big pricey ideas and the majority have small pockets. You can't get blood from turnips, just a little juice. Lower taxes and your high mindedness, you aren't the creator.

Taxes continue to be high when houses have dropped so much.

Taxes down

Taxes down

Taxes – very high already. Prefer to not raise. Bring Texas township into Portage taxes! They're in the school system

Taxes first - very high for value of homes

Taxes getting out of hand as we meet rising costs. Keeping services up to date, affordable and maintaining condition of street, bridges, etc.

Taxes, more people without incomes.

Taxes, schools

Taxes, specifically school taxes.

Taxes. Roads.

Taxes. The property taxes keep going up, but the value of the property keeps falling.

Taxes too high. People leaving city.

Taxes. Traffic

Taxes. Higher quality of shopping - More business (more jobs)

Taxing retired folks out of their homes.

Terrible layout of old business properties - most need to be leveled (Sam's old warehouse, Kmart, old strip malls, etc.) Generate excitement by creating state-of-the-art shopping and give opportunity to those who want work, but can't afford the overhead. The area needs more jobs and to hold down costs of operating as much as possible.

The benefits manager makes decisions that should be made by her manager and the city manager. The assistant city manager and benefits manager are making self serving decisions and there is no one in city government who dares to oppose them. They are vindictive and city manager looks the other way

The fire department working with a skeleton crew. Maybe that will change when a city leader's house burns down! Otherwise they don't feel it's important. Very sad!

The general economy.

The Kalamazoo Promise.

The maintenance costs for the trailways, park facilities and roads. So much of these capital improvements have been built in the last 5 to 10 years that we have not experienced much in the way of replacement/ repair costs yet

The possible move of Pfizer out of town

The way people drive, speed, cell phone

There are many foreclosures and declining areas. Need to lower taxes.

There are many empty strip malls and too many apartment not full, yet keep building more

There has been a large migration from Portage to Mattawan. Building new schools was a great start to stop this, now we need to increase the quality of our Portage education.

There needs to be more lanes on Centre Street going west

Threat of high taxes.

To maintain a safe community

Too conservative socially, pretend the large population that is socioeconomically disadvantaged doesn't exist

Too many buildings for new businesses destroying green space.

Too many new developments

Too much business development

Too much commercial building, too many empty stores

Too much retail growth. Do we really need more restaurants?

Too much watering of streets instead of grass.

To provide a good environment for keeping the schools good or even better!

Traffic

Traffic

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Traffic

Traffic and road conditions.

Traffic both on Westnedge and Oakland; Kilgore between those streets as well. Several traffic pockets on Kilgore just east of Kilgore plus other areas

Traffic congestion

Traffic congestion

Traffic congestion.

Traffic congestion.

Traffic congestion. More people seem to be moving south of Portage, but commute north to Kalamazoo. Enhanced bus routes, expanded bike trails may encourage commuters to take a “green” commute.

Traffic – speed - cell phones

Traffic flow

Traffic flow and road repairs/replacements. Crime increase Police and fire protection staffing levels.

Traffic, neighborhood condition

Traffic on Westnedge

Traffic on Westnedge - there needs to be road behind businesses on the east side of Westnedge.

Traffic Planning. Getting underground utility wiring. (No overhead wiring).

Traffic, spending.

Traffic. Keeping taxes affordable while providing a nice city to live in. Expanding broadband internet services to the entire area.

Traffic. Traffic signals aren't being sequenced with the constant stopping. It takes 15 to 20 minutes to drive from I-94 to Centre and Westnedge on most days. But I can and have driven from Kilgore through Kalamazoo to Borgess hospital in 15 minutes, but it will take me 8 to 10 minutes to drive from Idaho to Kilgore. That's crazy!

Traffic. We also have to keep up police and fire protection as well as the cleanliness of the city.

Trafficking of drugs and drug usage

Trees – aging – power outages and telephone out due to storms (wind and ice). Even in summer big limbs come down in no storm!

Trying to make too many changes – too many new restaurants

Under appreciation of teachers at PPS.

Unemployment

Unemployment/layoffs

Unemployment/layoffs

Unemployment leads to less money

Unoccupied retail space in small strip malls.

Unused buildings/store fronts

Urban blight. The residential tax base is moving west.

Urban sprawl – we need to avoid cutting down trees/developing green fields into asphalt jungle.

Low impact development

Urban sprawl- failure to utilize brown field resources and the erosion of the city's natural beauty.

Using good judgment to keep costs in line with revenue, using surveys which are designed to elicit desired responses.

Vacant home due to foreclosure.

Value of homes needs to stabilize need more Sr. Citizen housing options.

We feel less secure in the Foxwood, Misty Creek, Wedel's area.

Westnedge

Westnedge flow of traffic

When to limit development. How big is too big?

Where we're going to get money for maintenance of our infrastructure and improvements

Widen of main arteries (Oakland, Milham, Centre, etc)

With the slow growth of high paying jobs, Portage will struggle to keep taxes low enough so people can afford to live here. Lookout if Pfizer should dump this plant or Stryker gets bought out and quits expanding here.

Work

You are terrible with businesses, stupid things like signage, planting too many trees, rules. I know several businesses that left because of this.

37. How would you classify your racial or ethnic heritage? [Other - specify]

There were no credible responses to this response option.

39. Which of the following best describes where you live? [Other - specify]

Motel

42. If you have access to the Internet from home, what type of internet service do you have? [Other - specify]

3G

AT&T

AT&T

AT&T

AT&T

AT&T

AT&T

AT&T

AT&T

AT&T U-Verse

AT&T U-Verse

AT&T U-Verse

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JAS

Mobil

SBC

Wireless.

Wireless - but would love a city internet people could subscribe to as utility.

44. Please indicate below any other comments, concerns, or suggestions you may have for the City of Portage.

A better “book return” system at the library. To not have to get out of the car on the ice; is dangerous why not a mail box with a long chute?

A city engineer that does what? Why have the position in the city? An assistant parks director retires so several events will no longer happen? Why have park director? Try lowering taxes for a change! Does the assessor live in Portage?

A few drivers on the bridge over I-94 (Oakland, going north) go straight to turn left on Vincent, and drivers in the inside lane (going north) go through the intersection and put on their left turn signals to turn left on to Vincent. Someone will be side swiped soon. The Christmas tree pick up is a joke. It takes the company weeks to pick up the trees.

A great place to live. I feel that my children had a good, sound education

A great place to raise children.

A limited amount of professional bow fishing on Long Lake. A limited amount of boats entering any public access of local lakes.

A reference listing of services available for people who might need assistance to help pay a bill etc. in an economic crisis and healthcare options for the uninsured or under-insured.

A second cleanup in fall or summer. Reevaluation of brush remover, causing yard damage during pickup.

A signal light must be put up at Oakland and Vincent – cars will not stop on Oakland to let cars on Vincent out (or flashing light on sign - stating leave intersection open)

Add traffic light at Brookwood and Centre. Add sidewalks to both sides of Centre between Oakland and Shaver. Consider changing the recycling bins to something with wheels. Advocate for fall cleanup program in addition to spring.

All houses should be hooked up to sewer - no septic tanks in city.

All of you are doing a swell job. Thank you.

Angling south of Centre needs resurfacing. Traffic light sensors at Centre and Angling have been problematic since installed. Do not consistently activate properly, especially turn onto west Centre. Can sit several minutes when Centre is clear of traffic. Enjoy biking/ walking trails. The Portager could probably be printed more inexpensively (paper quality, etc)

Appearance does matter. With aspects of the infrastructure starting to deteriorate or crumble, it may be necessary to pass a mileage for improvements. I don't think the city has done as good a job cutting their costs, while maintaining services. The private sector has had to do so, now it is time for the government as well.

Ask businesses to enhance landscaping in and around parking lots. Plant more trees. Quickly remove eye-sores. Keep properties cleaner.

At the intersection of Romence and Westnedge, establish a no turn on red signal and use left turn signals in the morning

At this time you're doing a good job and I'm happy to say “I live in Portage!”

Austin Lake does not need fixing - water is clearer with less floating weeds than years ago. DNR should consider higher fees at launching area. Do not raise taxes, we are already overtaxed here and in a bad economy.

Band with other local governments to form regional authorities to provide common

services and eliminate redundant employees. City should further reduce number of employees by considering privatization of all appropriate city services. City should eliminate current services that are not governmental in nature.

Better neighborhood patrols

Better speed control on our street. We have 25 mph posted but many go 40-50

Bike lanes on many streets have cracks, debris, and other obstacles that force us bike riders into the traffic lanes. Tar patching is not a good solution – very bumpy. Broken glass, sand and gravel, twigs and holes make these lanes dangerous

Bike trails – bad condition. Gravel, branches, holes, cracked pavement – sweep often. cars ignore bikes – police don't enforce laws where cars block sidewalks, walkways, etc

Bikeways and trailways are the jewel of the city. Keep adding trails

Blow snow on my side walk after I clean. Driver too fast, knocks mail boxes down.

Boulevards are looking sad. Stop putting them in if you can't afford to keep them up (Centre)

Bring back the Celery Flats canoe rentals. The crews/supervisors doing both the spring and fall clean-ups could use a little common sense doing their jobs.

Brush collection needs to be more frequent. See brush piles all over during the 3 month between cycles. July storm they didn't come for 6 weeks – then pick up and chew what they wanted

Brush pickup after the July storm tore up the lawn and left a mess in the streets, probably the worst job done to date by whoever was doing that job.

Brush pickup, cleanup could be improved - they leave a mess. Snow plowing - nice if they cleared our street before they cleared parking lots of the parks in the city. Bike lanes on streets could be cleaned once in a while.

Brush pickup is far too restrictive in what you will take and what you won't and confusing. Still unclear why you won't take trimming from hedges, shrubs

Business and industry need to be brought here. We have plenty of places for them

By and large I have been very satisfied with our growth - schools and priorities. I do question our planning committee for land development. Too many empty strip malls in south Portage and we are building more - seems ridiculous.

Cable is over priced and internet competition is limited.

Can anyone do anything about PCEC students standing at Milham and Constitution smoking (who knows what)? I have contacted the school and police department, neither will intervene. These kids are not 18. Have someone put on the fence a picture of non-smokers lungs and a picture of smokers lungs, better than walking past all those cigarette butts on the ground. Better yet, fine their parents, who is buying cigs for them \$7.00 a pack.

Car "boom boxes" should be curtailed (loud music). Cut through traffic, speeding cars, and large commercial vehicles routinely use Concord. This small neighborhood street should have limited access from Westnedge, and the "no trucks" ordinance should be enforced.

Portagers expect a high quality of life, not noisy traffic and commercial vehicles

Cars parked on lawns, streets not swept after services, too much money spent on parks and services, school board issues.

Cell service is not consistent. Wish we had an Aldi or Save a Lot. The Portage Community Center is awesome! We love the library. More frequent curbside household pickups. Changes need to be made for the annual brush pickups. Currently, the city announces that

residents should place brush in the area between the sidewalk and curb. In my area, I've watched four people, in two city pickup trucks, just following the pickup crews and basically not doing anything. Occasionally, one of the men will get out of the truck and rake some of the debris that didn't get picked up, but only rake it out of the way of traffic, yet leave it in the street. Other than that, they are useless and costing the taxpayers money for doing nothing. And look at the amount of gasoline they're using! In the meantime, the pickup crew is damaging lawns in the areas between the sidewalk and curb. The whole neighborhood looks like crap after these crews are done. And I assume, the city has to go back and fix the damaged lawns, at the expense of the tax payers; money that could be better spent in other areas.

Check speed on Sprinkle.

Check walk lights at Mall and by car wash

City administration provides decision of city council. Rather than other way around (extremely poor leadership). Hostility towards suggestion of change or new ideas. These are not indictments on current practices or current poor past indictments. Times change and so must we. When handling important issues such as tax assessment, deal with the real problem rather than invite supposed experts in to try to convince taxpayers they don't understand or hire consultants to come up with implausible explanations – data conversion? Really? No one held accountable? Nothing fixed? Confirms taxpayers distrust

City and schools need to work together to improve or replace McCamley Field. In its current state it is not a good representation of Portage.

City employees – get out and drive through the neighborhoods and report and fine cars on lawns, long grass, blight, etc. Some parts of Portage are beginning to look like parts of Comstock Twp.

City engineering staff should better utilize asset management to preserve roadway condition such as crack sealing, micro-surfacing etc.

City inspections are difficult to work with, over zealous with application of fees and interpretation of codes and permits, have driven businesses out of Portage. Makes it hard to compete in this economy

City is doing a great job.

City needs to enforce people not parking in the street for snow removal! Very bad in my neighborhood.

City officials need to remain cordial with the citizenry. Treating complaints/concerns with respect and honesty is very important. Our boulevards are very nice. Efforts at cost cutting are appreciated.

City parks and schools should recycle. Trash bins at various parks and tennis courts are filled with water bottles, juice, etc.- a wasteful eyesore. Leaf pickup is inconsistent; sometimes great, other times they leave a mess. Sometimes our street is the last one in town to have the snow plowed.

City sewer for all houses within city limits.

City taxes are so expensive for my house. Houses around mine paid about \$1000 less than me I don't know why.

City water and sewer for all of Mandigo Ave. along with new payment would be great. parks and holiday lighting are excellent. Softball program is well organized.

Clean the sidewalk from the park on Portage to Lakeview elementary

Clean up of streets after pickup and cleanup has declined. Decline of enforcement of time limits for putting limbs and yard waste in streets.

Collection people/equipment tear up lawns! Street is a mess. Need better units to clean streets -vacuum trucks.

Combine local cities into one city, saving many dollars.

Combine services, stop building buildings, use buildings from Upjohn's. Less employees at city hall! The economy is killing us. I hate seeing for sale signs all throughout Portage.

Coming from St. Joseph 3 years ago, I consider many of the services between SJ and Portage as comparable. However, Portage property taxes are ridiculously high. Tax levels must be kept in check! While residents must live within their means in a tough economy, the city must as well, and make the tough cuts that any business would have to. The city cannot try to tax itself out of a problem – it must cut where possible!

Concern about the medical marijuana problem (no one checks the card holder) Too many special assessments on lake properties, especially on fixed income families.

Concerned at number of foreclosed or empty houses in our area (near Crossroads Mall) – Manhattan/Greenview. Vandalism in city parks and use of air soft guns in city parks (Haverhill). One foreclosed house on street (near Manhattan) has evidence of possibly being meth house. Peeling laminate in renovated kitchens with previous owners likely drug users. Rumors, but still scary to hear.

Concerned that water/sewer rates continue to increase much faster than the rate of inflation

Concerning the Portage Cross Country Invitational - parking in our neighborhood isn't welcome. I emailed the traffic engineer a week ago and have yet to hear from him. The parents who park on our streets are rude. Consider shuttle buses to and from high schools, churches
Continue controlled growth – conserve open space – manage budget for minimum tax
Continue cooperative efforts with Kalamazoo

Continue funding our school programs and provide cultural activities for children - parents are forced to pay for their children's recreational exercise. Love the natural aspect of the bike paths - beautiful, easy access

Continue to maintain high standards. Continue to move forward, environmentally, educationally, and economically.

Control cost of water from Kalamazoo. Find a new recycling company for Portage. Bid out and have one garbage company collect for the city.

Crime has spiked in my neighborhood. Many break-ins. Foreclosed/abandoned homes are causing issues by being poorly maintained. Homes rented out are filled by people of lower income levels than the remainder of the neighborhood.

Crosswalks on Sprinkle to Ramona for bike riders and walkers to safely cross to south side

Cul-de-sacs are not cleaned and our driveways get more snow dumped from snow plows. Too much testosterone for the plows knocking down mailboxes.

Cultural events are an appropriate place to cut money and put it toward other services

Curbing dogs and responsible dog owners especially in public areas like Moorsbridge Elementary

Curbside brush pickup. Never seem to pick it up when it's supposed to in our area. Need to have spring cleanup more than once a year

Cut taxes – encourage businesses to do business in Portage – keep businesses here and

growing – quit putting in those darn boulevards with extra maintenance to them
Deer are out of control.

Deteriorating a once-premium public school system due to seemingly unqualified school board members making poor decisions. Schools affect home values.

Did not agree with decision to license the day care with playground directly across street. Felt people rammed it through in spite of opposition. Am considering request to lower tax. This is a negative property value

Do not fall victim to “shared services.” Portage has always done a great job of taking care of itself. My taxes do not go to help other communities. If they do, this city will have lost my family as residents.

Do not raise taxes. Attract festivals (arts, food, music, sculptures, and many more to increase businesses, hotels, shopping centers, more employment). Have well organized fairs which should be protected and secure. It will raise revenues.

Don't raise taxes – our income has gone down in the last 3 years!

Don't spend what you don't have.

Don't work on main roads at the same time - difficult navigating thru the city

During ice storm a police officer checked if I was warm twice.

Education - people/business used to flock here for the top notch schools. Not now with budget cuts. Education is no longer a draw for businesses or their employees. This needs to be addressed and brought back to an outstanding level.

Education, support, and promoting of the outstanding school system is essential in maintaining the vibrancy of Portage

Encourage individual responsibility for maintaining property.

Encourage weekend activities along the different walking roads.

Enforce school zone speed limits. Enforce red light “running.” Make property owners cut back their bushes so none overhang the sidewalk or road.

Engage in ultra- conservative budgeting. Eliminate programs that serve only a small % of residents. Dump the idea that Portage must invest in making Portage an idyllic community - something for everyone. City should restore driveway burning permission. Trucks too fast and blast snow half way up the drives, destroy mailboxes

Ethnic/racial equality is not a reality in Portage – needs to be. Cultural programming is very one-sided in this regard – 95%-5%? This could be improved. Thank you

Even with a water softener there is still a problem with rust in the water.

Excellent newsletter

Extend bike paths to encourage exercise and non-motor transportation

Fairness is the best policy (smile)

FDR said it best, “The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.” A lot of extra modern conveniences are nice but basic is better and costs less. To be honest, I do not believe this costly poll will change anything. Your track record speaks loudly. If you do and change, good luck.

Fill the many vacant office spaces and hold new developments and costs. Slow down.

Find suitable businesses for empty building spaces or determine new uses.

First pursue city employee concessions - x% temporary pay cuts of all city employees,

benefit concessions especially insurance, then and only then I would look at reducing staffing, summer programs, park programs and maintenance. Pursue a wireless community with respect to internet access

For the survey to be private. Some of your questions were not private.

Garbage containers are not a lawn ornament. Make it so they must be stored at rear or back side of home or garage during week

Get tougher on sign ordinance – Westnedge is a jungle

Give teenagers a place to hang out with moderate supervision to make them feel more responsible and social towards others!

Good fire/first aid department. Good refuse pickup

Good job! Please don't let it go down. We need schools and parks, police and fire departments; streets and no snow. Money will come and go.

Government lake board is a farce. Meetings – if I want to pray I will go to church!
Everybody is in bed with mayor! Police dispatchers treat callers as though merely bothersome!
Common police answer - we don't take care of that!

Great schools and services. Shame about the fired superintendent

Handicap access during construction (i.e. under I-94). On street bicycling is dangerous, wider bike lanes and more off street options.

Has grown from friendly community to near sin city.

Have a branch US post office in the SE

Have lived in Portage 50+ years and love living here

Home assessments need to improve. More police patrols on certain shifts.

Housing codes need to be enforced without someone having to complain - perhaps we need a special housing code policeman driving around. Hold off on more walk ways. How many people actually use those? Use money for sidewalks (this is where retired people walk) and fix streets. Also no more day cares - what a mess.

I am a senior and I am satisfied with the services that affect me.

I am proud to live in Portage. Many people work to make it a success. Thank You!

I am satisfied living in Portage. The cost of city water and taxes are really the only things that are issues with me. I do live at a dead end and snow is always left at the end of my driveway. Also, I have lost a mailbox

I am very concerned about the drug situation, especially in the schools. I know it is there because I have a young person who keeps me posted. It isn't pretty. Also the meth problem is frightening in the community as a whole.

I am very happy that I live in Portage – I feel safe and there are many cultural opportunities

I appreciate services that help homeowners like recycling, brush and leaf pick up, spring clean up. The only frustration I've had in 9 years is the cleanup after the July winds. My brush cleanup was the following week. I took a day off work to clean up a tree that came down. My neighbors and I called daily and were told keep to the 3' size and pick up schedule. Ten days later I got a note that larger limbs were okay. Almost a month later it was picked up. All the grass underneath was dead. I know there was a lot to clean up, but info changed and it was not timely.

I believe the city's tax base should give us plenty of income.

I dislike the "belly blades" on the snow plows. They compress and compact the snow

instead of actually clearing it away. This compacted layer of hardened snow then freezes into a dangerous sheet of ice!

I don't think you should be fixing things that don't need it. The same roads have been fixed every year while all others are neglected. Roundabouts are built when a simple traffic light will do. In 3-5 years, I will have to pay thousands of dollars for you to upgrade my city sewer when there is nothing wrong with it the way it is. All that money could be used elsewhere. If it is not broke don't fix it.

I enjoy living here, it's close to everything yet enough trees, parks, and lakes to give a feeling of openness.

I feel it's important to maintain services while keeping taxes near same. Before eliminating jobs, ask everyone to take pay cuts. We don't need any more job loss in this area.

I feel like the junk people wanted picked up sat there for a long time in people's yards. Major eyesore.

I hate how the streets are a mess after cleanup – they need to be “swept”

I hate the huge containers for recycling in Woodbridge neighborhood. Isn't there a size smaller? I'm going to have to build on for trash bins alone.

I have been to city meetings and the people don't care about anything – I'm very upset about a lot of issues in Portage.

I have called many times regarding a turn lane at Stanley and Portage. It is unsafe southbound, making a left is very vulnerable to traffic moving 50 mph.

I have lived in Portage for 34 years and loved every moment. Thank you.

I have lived in Portage since 1977. I feel it is a great community in which to live and raise a family.

I have lived in 6 cities, and by comparison Portage is one of the best to live, work, and raise a family.

I have lived in Portage for 32 years and feel it is a good and safe place to live. I feel the taxes are fair.

I have many concerns and comments but never get results when I call. The city is going to do what “they” think is right.

I just hope taxes won't go up since Snyder wants to cut out property tax break for seniors. I am struggling as it is.

I like the activity of Westnedge. It's like the great gateway to whatever you need. I like the nightlife – keep swinging.

I love it here.

I love living in Portage and feel that we have been fortunate to raise our children here. But I do have some pet peeves. The general culture of big box business is troubling to me. South Westnedge looks like Beckley Road in Battle Creek or 28th St. in Grand Rapids. There are very few locally owned, independent businesses. While it is true that chains tend to be more stable, the fact is that most of the money spent in those businesses does not stay local. In fact, studies show that for every \$100 spent in a locally owned business, approximately \$65-70 stays local, whereas only about \$30-40 stays local for every \$100 spent in a chain store. To put it another way, according to the study *Local works: examining the impact of local business on the West Michigan Economy*, if residents of Kent County redirected only 10% of the money they spend in chain stores to locally owned businesses, they would stimulate the local economy by nearly \$140

million, which would create over 1600 jobs, and add approximately \$53 million in additional wages to the community. This kind of economic shift is staggering. And it does not ask people to spend any more money than they already do, only to spend it in different venues. Yet our local government continues to support big box and chain businesses, at the expense of the local community. I feel that one way to stimulate the local economy is for local government to get behind Buy Local initiatives and promote these efforts. The potential gain for the city could be enormous. One area of underutilized intergovernmental cooperation is with the school district. A strong school district is vital to the health of any community. There is currently very little cooperation between city government and the school district. Coordination of efforts such as snow removal, landscaping, maintenance, gasoline purchasing, fleet purchasing, natural gas purchasing could have a major impact on budget. The bigger the insurance pool, the lower the cost to both employer and employee. This is merely a small sample of ways the two entities could work together. We have plenty of trails and parks in Portage, but very few areas where dogs can be off leash, and no areas (that I have been able to find) where dogs are welcome to play in the water at any of our beaches. I realize that there are sanitation and safety issues when dogs share space with people. But, when the summers are sweltering, as they were this year, it would be great to have a dog-dedicated or dog-friendly beach area.

I love living in Portage. Thank you!

I love living in Portage. Life is great living in Portage. Thank you for fixing Milham, everything is very convenient to get to. Thank you for making Portage a great place to live.

I love living in Portage. I'm proud of the schools, and the care that is taken to keep it looking beautiful. Even though I don't have much opportunity to use them, I'm proud of all the parks, bike and walking trails, and cultural opportunities we have. Thanks.

I love living in Portage and feel safe here (I'm a single mom). The only drawback is that Portage doesn't have a "downtown." I go to Kalamazoo for that. The bandshell is nice but in an awkward location. I love Celery Flats and the Portage Creek walkway - that is a real gem. I walk there often and love it all seasons. Thank you

I love living in Portage and always have. I've lived here my entire life

I love Portage – the proximity to everything is wonderful. However, the city needs to put wires underground to keep services on. It's a major concern. Also, I walk my dog in the street – Portage is very lean on sidewalks.

I love Portage. In 20 minutes I can be wherever I need to be. I use the library and am active in the senior center. The city is beautiful, but I would concentrate on the roads now instead of the parks. There are enough. And dog parks too.

I love the recycling program, I beg you to keep it going! The brush removal machine took grass and soil along with branches but it was after storm damage so it was a large pile. As population increases, need to keep community safe with increased fire and police protection. We need to help businesses to grow here somehow.

I love the Portage Parks system - but the volleyball court sand at Harbors West Park is absolutely terrible. All the other parks have beach sand, but this one has rocky, construction-grade sand. Street snow removal is always so fast - very nice work! Prompt and thorough. I would love to see more local "real" news in the Portage Gazette (crime, etc.) The current content seems irrelevant and "fluffy." The road surface of W. ON avenue (between 12th street and W. N Avenue) is utterly atrocious - so many potholes, I worry about damage to my car and choose

alternative daily commute route.

I love the GIS mapping tool. Continue leaf and brush pickup.

I moved to Portage 2 years ago from the Detroit area, and I love living here. The parks and bike routes are great.

I notice you did not mention unions as an area that could be cut. We all need to sacrifice some. I would support cutting union benefits before I would support reducing the number of snow plows, number of police, or other services.

I see a lot of the city street/parks employees driving around mostly in the afternoon hours. I was told by a city employee if they have nothing to do and the weather is rainy they just drive around using gas.

I think Portage could improve traffic flow, especially as more stop lights appear. Couldn't some lights turn to blinking as traffic slows at night. It would also save gas

I think the city should keep track of foreclosed homes and require the banks that own them to keep them up so they don't harm property values.

I think the roundabout on 12th and Milham was a bad idea and will cause more delays/confusion and safety concerns.

I think the new boulevards are wasteful and a pain. First, you have to maintain the grass and trees, paying a city worker. They could have another lane for traffic. Ridiculous. I think when you are a senior citizen you shouldn't have to pay as much school taxes as families with kids in schools. We are on set incomes.

I was disappointed to see the loss of funding for the Apple Festival. With respect to the condition of the parks, it would be nice to have soccer nets on the soccer goals. I think it is important to maintain services and keep the city hall area looking nice.

I was hopeful with the road work in front of the new Portage Central High School I would see less traffic congestion. Unfortunately, it continues to be a nightmare, particularly in front of the middle school. Makes me wonder how many families actually utilize the school buses - and yes - this is likely a school issue more than city governance issues.

I wish the bike lanes were more connected/continuous, especially on busy/high traffic roads, but also on our little road - no excuse not to have reliable bike lanes on E. Shore. I also wish they connected to Vicksburg rail. The old train line could be better utilized by the city! Also it was silly of the city to not purchase that little tiny lot by the canal on Portage and incorporate it into Lakeside Park. What is the building going in there? A home? A business? Ridiculous. Our street could use resurfacing

I wish there were a "downtown" area like Kalamazoo - with smaller local businesses, rather than the big boxes on Westnedge. I would love to see a Portage farmers market. I would be happy to pay a tax that would provide free health care to all Portage residents. Could we have a dog park? There are plenty of places within the Portage Park System that would be suitable. I would like to see fewer trees cut down for commercial development.

I would like to see a Costco or Kroger built in Portage - possibly at the old Kmart location. Send newsletter via email to save money. For those that don't have email, continue mailing it.

I would like to see Portage market the city to surrounding areas. Not enough people know why Portage is a great city to live and work.

I would not be a supporter of intergovernmental cooperation/consolidation. Although,

initially beneficial, it generally causes inefficiencies, waste, corruption, complexity. It also moves local decision-making further away from the people

I'm an avid cyclist and support all efforts to improve safety and quality and quantity of bike lanes and trails. I am always impressed by the professionalism of Portage public safety officers.

I'm elderly, on a low, fixed income. I would hate to merge anything with Kalamazoo.

I'm very happy to live in Portage. Our city government is exceptional.

I've lived in Portage many years and have been very happy. My kids went to high school here too and happy.

I've loved living in Portage. There is a balance of wholesome activities for all age groups, pleasant environment, and services which support responsible home care and maintenance. Cheers!!

I've noticed on my tax bill a charge for the city of Portage collecting taxes for Kalamazoo county. Why doesn't the county pay for this? I know this is not the city's fault, but the Portage school taxes have gotten so high that we have bought property in Alamo township to get out of the Portage school district.

If higher taxes are too be considered - I would want to see additional services or faster services on snow removal, brush removal and leaf pickup.

If there are problems with police or fire protection, the citizens need to know. Citizen input could be very helpful.

If you love it, like I do, please try to help keep it beautiful.

If you want to save money stop sprinkling by September 1. Save on water, lawn care, energy to pump water and mowing. If you can afford to have a sprinkling system, then please spend just a little more and buy a rain monitor system to keep them off when it has been raining for 3 day's straight! Nothing makes me angrier when I go to work in the morning and see those dumb sprinklers running, especially when it is raining!!

Improve patching on roads (post winter) – make smoother. Also repair road manhole areas better.

Improve services for seniors – more concern keeping youth services ongoing

In general, Portage is a very nice city to live in. My main concern is that since my property values are down, so should my property taxes be going down as well!

In my neighborhood (southeast of airport) I rarely see patrol cars. I would like to see them late night, early morning. We need more street lights. Harvest Lane is too dark at night, needs at least one more street light.

Increase consolidation of government services to conserve resources. Focus on outcomes in education (age, college attendance rates, costly college success rates). Make community more bike and walk-friendly.

Increased traffic on Osterhout. Need to thin our deer in the southern part of Portage. Move sidewalks away from curves to improve safety.

Increasing utility (water/power) rates every year is getting out of hand. Better snow removal for residential streets in regard to the time element. It should be done quickly. The timing of the traffic signals on Westnedge could be vastly improved.

Inner city of Portage needs direction and policies for vision of tomorrow in a coordinated manner.

It is important to keep people wanting to live in Portage. Tax breaks for companies and residents unfortunately are necessary at this time for both, unless it involves services. Residents that own 2 or more homes (as long as someone is living in them) should not be taxed extra if the owners themselves are not living in them – non homestead. Leave taxes alone! People are leaving at an alarming rate for the suburbs.

It was a mistake to out source the water dept. An employee with 27 years experience was terminated because of a misdemeanor that didn't happen on the job. In doing this Portage lost their best reliable worker in that dept.

It would be nice if the city enforced the laws we all ready have.

It would be nice if there was a fund for shoveling widow's sidewalks. We have neighbors who struggle when the plows fill them up again. Maybe Portage could get with churches and have their youth groups bless the elderly with their service. I am sure this would be accepted by many churches. VFC would be a good start, and then on to others.

It's a great place to raise a family

It's a nice community clean and neat. They don't seem to harass the people.

It's expensive to live in Portage. The school system has issues. The value of my property has decreased so much I have to foreclose or try to sell it in this economy but don't have the money to do so. Increasing taxes wouldn't help people in this situation.

It's frustrating to pay city taxes and not receive trash pickup and spring cleanup. My condo association takes care of the other services (snow, leaves) so I won't complain about that.

It's nice to have Oakland Drive repaved south of Katie St. to Shaver.

Jobs. We need to be a place that attracts employers and entrepreneurs.

Just repair some streets and stop all the burn stuff on the city streets!

Keep doing a good job. Portage is a good place to live.

Keep in mind we aren't all rich.

Keep Portage the classy community it has always been. Don't let Kalamazoo drag us down.

Keep state land from being developed, allow areas for nature!

Keep up good work. Don't waste

Keep up the good work

Keep up the good work. Thank you.

Keep up the good work!

Keep up the great work! It is so appreciated Thank you! I've lived here since 1976- raised three children who went through our Portage School System, and am a retired teacher from Portage Public Schools.

Keep up the value of our condo.

Keep working with the schools to bring new residents (and housing) to Portage.

Keeping all our businesses open so people will have jobs.

Larger area of free wi-fi. Build some skyscrapers in downtown Portage and change building ordinance on some buildings.

Learn to have services within budget. Look at other ways to increase income. Hang tight and weather the storm – it will get better, we hope.

Less rules, signage, campfires. The shamrock deal was just plain stupid, same thing with the chickens. Give us a break, it makes me want to leave the city. I have 5 acres and you think

you should be able to tell me if I can have a chicken?

Level of “floating deck” trail through the bog for wheelchair users; make sure that traffic engineer keeps up to date with accessible pedestrian signals for blind residents and is quickly responsive to requests for APS installation.

Limit city council terms to 12 years. We need new blood on there.

Living at the very eastern edge of city, it seems like services (snow removal, brush collection, etc) is the last area to get served. Why not rotate our area to be at the beginning once in a while?

Living on a private drive doesn't allow us to have snow plowing, spring and fall cleanup, but we pay for it. Also it allows some neighbors to have trash in yards that wouldn't be allowed in the city.

Love how city government has balanced budget while making tough cuts to services. Know that's hard and we miss some of the things cut, but we appreciate the tough choices the city has had to make. Look forward to seeing some of the services return as things get better. Love living in Portage but wish money was spent wisely. 12th St roundabout will not help and if people can't do a four way stop right, they won't do roundabout correctly.

Love the outdoor plays

Lower rates for water/sewage

Maintain at least the present level of desirability.

Make it more business friendly. Structure business approval processes. Attract new business and increase tax base.

Make trailers clean their ponds, cut trees, fix roads, fire hydrants. Thank you

Manage traffic flow. Sprinkle road construction has caused damage to local roads (East Shore drive) and endangered lives. Massive cutting of trees is an ecological disaster and could be avoided

Many of us work in Kalamazoo which has serious problems with services, but we take no responsibility for those problems. Portage and Kalamazoo need to work together, especially in relation to improving Kalamazoo services.

Monitor speed of traffic on both Centre and Portage at busiest times.

Monthly or quarterly clean up instead of spring clean up. I lived on the west coast and they provided weekly, it was fantastic.

More activities for the teenagers to keep them off the streets.

More being done about the traffic violations such as: speeding, noisy motorcycles, reevaluation of speed limits on some streets

More city parks

More cutting of limbs blocking traffic

More housing for low income. More work

More police presence on Oakland. Traffic goes 45/50 speed limit is 35

More signage is needed in area of deer population. It would be great to be able to burn yard leaves. Level of crime seems high. Seems to usually be some construction repair going on for many months of the year. Long wait at light at Milham/Westnedge

More street sweeping, especially after winter snow melt (weekly would be best)

More timely brush pickup

More trash cans are needed on the bike trail – thanks for doggie poop bags, but there are

not enough cans to use for throwing them away. Portage has such a culture of glitz – just take care of services and forget about the costly ‘pretty’ stuff, i.e. green and red lights at Constitution and Romence at Christmas – what about our non-Christian neighbors?

Multiple families in one household, loud parties, parking in street. I have called police dozens of times and nothing changes

My concern is our police. I called to report a crime but because it involved seeing something out of state I was told they couldn’t help, would not even contact the police department where the person lived. I called them and they did a file so I could claim it on my home owners policy. The Portage police refused to pick up a phone!

My concern is garbage pickup. We have 4 different services on our street picking up 1 or 2 homes and noise level at 6 to 7 or 9. It seems to me that the city could contract a company for different sections of the city to save fuel costs and cut down on garbage truck traffic. I also would like garbage services paid by the city and monitored by the city. I would expect to pay for this service on my city tax bill. Bids for this service by the companies could possibly lower the cost.

My home valuation went down but my taxes went up. Stop crying about losing tax money.

My street has too many potholes

My wife grew up here and we chose Portage because of the overall quality of life – schools, parks, services, etc. I like that my street has a sidewalk on both sides – that says neighborhood to me. In this era of less revenue and anti-government sentiment (totally misplaced in my view), please consider smart tax increases to maintain the quality of life as much as possible in the community we love. Our fine community didn’t drop from the heavens – we paid for it, invested in it. It’s an ongoing process, people need to realize that. It pays itself forward after that investment.

Need an ordinance regarding frequency of garage sales. Traffic light timing could improve (maybe engineers have done all they can?). Love that we are working more with surrounding cities. Wish businesses along Westnedge were more pedestrian and bike friendly. Wish we had herby-curby for recycling. I am very happy with city government in general, though sometimes city staff are brusque (low morale?)

Need strong police department. Need to maintain/improve roads. Pro growth equals a stable tax base

Need to consider merging with other school districts in the county excluding the city of Kalamazoo. We have too many school districts in Michigan, which increases administrative costs.

Need to enforce 3 day rule on putting leaves in road! Need to enforce rules - some are putting brush in road weeks ahead of schedule. Can get city information online; maybe only mail the newsletter to those who request a hard copy

Need to freeze government employee’s wages (we’ve had no increase in our social security for three years)

Need to have better training for drivers education - also need to have better laws on teens - texting and driving.

Need to see and hear more about intergovernmental consolidation of services, fire and police etc. Can it save more money reduce tax base without changing protection?

Neighbors’ concerns for safety regarding operation of business out of home. Also recent

discharge of firearm within city by a neighbor

Nice paths and trails.

Nice place to live

Nice place to live. Good locations for shopping

No boulevard needed in front of Romence Gardens. Bring more small or large business to. Ease up on business sign laws. Allow burning of leaves in Portage like every other town does around us. This would save on cleanup costs.

No concerns, the city of Portage does a fantastic job of keeping the roadsides clean and I am very proud to be a Portage resident. Please keep up the good work and thanks for everything

No more apartment complexes. These ghetto families are running our community and our schools. No more trailer parks. How about a license to have a kid. The parents are stupid.

Nosey neighbors

Not enough brush cleanup times. Should have a fall cleanup as well as a spring clean-up (junk, appliances, etc)

Not enough ethnic diversity

Offer free events.

Offer internet service as a utility.

One of the best places to live.

Only concern is some streets need repair more than others.

Our concern is taxes. We are senior citizens and don't know how long we will be able to afford to live in Portage.

Our neighborhood seems to be the last one snow plowed or it doesn't happen at all.

Would love to see a few swimming pools in the area. Osterhout needs paved badly.

Our traffic signals are at times nonsensical - left turn arrows on when no cars are there.

The new high school light goes red for no apparent reason. The one on Centre stays red a bit too long. Thanks!

Over population - we need family planning - the city should not grow to the point where it becomes completely inefficient. We have exceeded carrying capacity on this earth. Resources are diminishing. Bigger is not better!

Overall great job by city and employees. Concern - vacant houses in neighborhood.

Overall it is a great city to live in, especially for families. We have arts, entertainment, recreation, community building activities and decent schools. City staff have been friendly, keep up the great work. I would rather see proof that city has tried to reduce controllable costs first before it passes the costs on.

Personalized services for seniors (not senior center). Removal snow on sidewalks and driveways. Help for seniors who have trees with falling leaves.

Please avoid raising taxes in times of economic distress in the country (with dropping home values).

Please consider paving Connecticut and New Hampshire, they are terrible. I am a road builder and consider them in desperate need. Thanks.

Please continue to provide adequate funding to support parks department and recreation programs. Excellent work by city manager and administration.

Please keep it simple. Bigger is not better (see Detroit) Police are rough

Please keep the state game area and area around it undeveloped

Please maintain the street surfaces. Get Consumers to maintain the power grid better, always losing power in southeast Portage. Keep police protection up and get a new police chief.

Please monitor the trash haulers who leak oil all over our streets. In general, I think the city does an excellent job and I love living here. I think the company that does the street sweeping does a less than satisfactory job. Also, could it be scheduled so there is no parking on those days? I'm thinking we need a "no parking" ordinance for lawns. Perhaps we need to explore not allowing home-based businesses such as auto repair that cause accumulation of vehicles at a residence and other unsightliness.

Please pave Forest Drive. Time the stop lights. There is no reason why this cannot be done better. Cars that speed seem to be rewarded with green lights. In general, I think Portage does well with future traffic planning.

Please try to keep taxes as low as possible while maintaining good services.

Police department has a very negative attitude. Water treatment is a big concern for quality of water compared to cost to build it.

Police do not enforce the running of red lights! Centre and Westnedge, Center and Shaver, Milham and Constitution are terrible. Quit worrying about a few miles over on Melody and concentrate on the real danger.

Police - inform residents about parking cars and recreational vehicles on lawns. But am pleased for all that the police do. Seems to be more dogs roaming the neighborhood. Please contact animal control - do they have dog licenses?

Police should put less emphasis on small infractions and more time on more severe crime. Use common sense. It's a money maker to keep their jobs.

Portage and Kalamazoo need to operate together, especially as services are reduced. We compete against Grand Rapids, Lansing, Chicago for jobs. Portage has a history of being snobbish and parochial. That needs to end.

Portage cannot remain as an island trying to benefit from Kalamazoo while isolating ourselves from their problems. The two cities' fates are linked and we need a healthy Kalamazoo to maintain a healthy Portage. Over taxation, over regulation, and ridiculous union demands have driven the quality jobs out of Michigan. Kalamazoo County as a whole needs to demonstrate that we can bring jobs back.

Portage currently has no ordinances to regulate landlords of single family dwellings – suggest 5 year inspection of rental property for commercial landlords to insure safety. Nearby rental property has been re-rented 8 times in past 20 years with no inspection – yet tenants report serious issues with gas, electricity, and no one deals with it

Portage is a great place to live. The city management is doing a great job, very accountable. Can you attract more businesses via taxes?

Portage is a very nice place to live. I feel safe wherever I go. I like the attention paid to beautiful landscaping and flower beds, especially the boulevards.

Portage is a wonderful place to live. Although it's a city, it still has a small town atmosphere. We have a wonderful amount of good services. Shopping, senior center, library, schools, parks.

Portage is a wonderful place to live! It is the perfect place to raise a family.

Portage is a great place to live and no one is perfect, and I love my home and my city and their progress since we moved in 1962. But beware that everyone is different and we are in for

bad times ahead. I'm afraid worse than now. As long as we continue to vote in good people on our boards, we will make it through the coming days. Please keep with up the good work, but keep the hardship people in your prayers.

Portage is a good place to live and raise children.

Portage is a "tree city," but there is too much money being spent. The brick walls look nice, but again too much money.

Portage is a great place to live

Portage is blessed with many lakes, game areas, bikeways and trails, please do not over develop or develop in areas that would encroach or jeopardize these precious assets. Continue bike path on Oakland north of I-94 up to Kilgore.

Portage is great place to live.

Portage is mean to business. The people who run the signs, banners, are rude, nasty, mean. Portage spends a lot of money on useless things, pays people too much and only wants more. Do less with less!! Thank you and God bless

Portage is not business friendly. We must make it easier for businesses to want to come to Portage, this will also grow your tax base

Portage is trying to be a good community to live in. I am proud to be part of the area.

Portage is very well managed. Our taxes are well spent and are very effective. Portage is a beautiful little city. Thank you for all your efforts.

Portage needs a sense of community. Some kind of downtown type of feel. Dayton has a mall with this type of set up. Build new football fields.

Portage needs to have shovel-ready plans - a ten year plan to reduce energy consumption, a ten year plan to reduce waste, a ten year plan to promote/optimize public transportation.

Portage requires a P.R. improvement to touch the community better, maintain and improve the image of the city. Not rest on the past image of P.P.S. They have declined in the past several years.

Portage should open the city to ISP competition.

Portage Terrace Trailer Park could use some new roads. Thank you!

Portage will need to cut costs in the future, and we as a nation are headed for years of very tough times. The sooner this is done the better. Portage will be able to thrive in the new environment. Raising taxes in the future is probably not going to be an option.

Proactive traffic management needed. For example, during Westnedge rework by Portage Central HS, traffic back ups at Shaver were terrible. We could have allowed right turns on red temporarily to alleviate this situation.

Property taxes continue to increase, even though home prices slide.

Provide a place for boats using Austin Lake to dock and use Lakeview park.

Provide free broadband internet. Create jobs, attract companies. Lower taxes.

Put a stoplight at Kilgore and Bronson instead of just a flasher. It takes forever to cross Kilgore.

Put power lines underground in any new road construction where they are digging anyway. It really cleans up the roadside.

Put the community survey on the Portage website/homepage and get it done online.

Don't let the same person do this survey annually

Question #20 asks whether we would rather maintain services & raise taxes or maintain taxes and further reduce services. That's the wrong question. The question should not be either

one or the other. There are many ways for the city to be more efficient in order to prevent the "either/or" question. Looking for ways to cut waste, improve efficiencies, is another win-win solution in our current economy or in any economy for that matter.

Questionnaire design needs to be changed. Demographic section could save space, ink for all the don't knows. If one doesn't know their facts, he needs no questionnaire.

Quicker snow removal

Quit beautifying, and use the money where its really needed.

Quit making boulevards, it's a waste or maintenance funds in the future. Quit plowing the roads with only a couple of inches of snow - this is Michigan. Cut or close library. With the web its no longer affordable. When the city develops or design new areas, quit designing them that require future tax dollars to maintain. Just the boulevards that have been put in during the last 10 years require too much maintenance with no benefit. Develop the Portage Promise. Kalamazoo will draw new people faster.

Ramona Park fields are ignored.

Ramona Park has gone down hill. We don't go anymore

Really disappointed that Apple Fest and Haunted Forest were removed.

Reconsider running city water/sewer in the stagecoach plat.

Recycling should not have to be pre-sorted.

Reduce taxes, reduce government

Residents should be notified if the storm drain is in front of their home to keep it cleared.

Resolve the brown water problem - many have it. If not currently established, begin a foundation in order to maintain parks and trails in future.

Resurface many roads. School events bring a lot of people to the town and a new football stadium for the schools would be beneficial to the city. Look at Vicksburg and Otsego - they have beautiful new stadiums for one school and we have an old stadium for two schools to share. Portage looks pretty sad in comparison. City needs to help the schools.

Road repair.

Roads are sometimes not fixed as soon as I'd like. More pickle ball courts.

Roads are very messy when they get through with pickups. Sometimes they leave leaf mess in the streets.

Roads seem to be deteriorating - Constitution, Romence, Oakland south of Centre, many side residential streets. Can we please stop building restaurants? Liquid road de-icing is proven to be more effective, why are we still using salt which harms plant life and cars.

Roadways are left less than desirable after leaf and brush pickup. Street sweeper seldom are in this area. Bikeways in parts of this area are seldom used because of condition.

Rotate starting areas each year for leaf pickup.

Save our schools. It's nice to have the new schools but not if we can't fill them quality teachers and leaders.

School district must maintain and/or improve its competitiveness – academic standards
Senior Center needs a larger facility

Several metal, storm drain covers, man hole covers, etc. have been stolen in our neighborhood resulting in unsafe conditions for children who could fall into the holes.

Share sacrifice. Resist corruption. Praise the Lord.

Shouldn't have to pay Kalamazoo and Portage water.

Shrinking police force expected to do the same work protecting our city with less manpower.

Sidewalks too close to streets. Clean sidewalk in the morning. Snowplow covers it up in the afternoon with wet snow that a snow blower won't take care of. Snow plows should travel slower and not cover sidewalks.

Since Centre gets plowed so frequently in the winter, I don't think it should be the residents' responsibility to keep the sidewalks clean. There are many elderly/disabled people on Centre. It would also provide a few jobs.

Slow down the snow plows on small streets. They go too fast, cars aren't allowed to go that fast - We need more street lights on many side streets to fight crime. Also snow plows 3 at a time on dry clear streets (laughable) - otherwise love Portage

Snow plowing seems like a waste of resources i.e. trucks, gas, maintenance for something that people can do on their own Go over main streets many times while neglecting side streets e.g. Constitution (is that not a main street?) Better than roads in Kalamazoo. Anxiously waiting for ramp to be completed - looks awesome so far

Snow plows damage markers and lawns

Snow plows go dangerously fast through our neighborhood. 16. Many potholes. Asphalt fill is not a good solution

Snow plows push snow against my driveway. Would like to see more patrols at city parks to reduce loud music. This is a problem for residents who live across from parks.

Snow removal can be slow after large storms making it impossible to get down our street. Main roads are always clear but subdivisions should not take 36-48 hours to clear. Overall an excellent city.

Snow removal in Woodbridge is awful. We deserve better service than we get. It takes 2-3 days to clear snow. Rudgate subdivision in Texas township gets cleared long before us. And we pay the taxes.

Snow removal was better before outsourcing. Mail boxes can get knocked over

Something needs to be done on Centre at the US 131 ramps. Cars trying to get on US 131 northbound coming from Texas Corners get backed up which makes it difficult for cars coming off the highway, southbound, and cars trying to turn onto the southbound ramp at the light. South Shore Drive badly needs paving. Stop charging people an exorbitant sewer rate when they didn't use any water in the winter (like snowbirds)

Stay away from Kalamazoo, they have everything to gain we can do nothing but lose! The Kalamazoo Gazette reported that the average Kalamazoo police officer received \$80,000 pay last year. Portage can't afford Kalamazoo. Kalamazoo can't either.

Still need help with Davis Creek. Trees fell during last wind storm and have partially blocked the creek. Not sure who's responsible to clean this up. One tree belongs to neighbor on opposite side of creek.. I don't believe they have even been out there. Damage was done to fences on our side of creek. Can they be cited to clean this up?

Still upset that I was charged for a service fee for a home alarm call even though I pay the city over \$5k of taxes each year. Poor customer service. If there were competition, I would have fired the city of Portage and went with another option. Don't nickel and dime me if I am paying high taxes.

Stop building recreation areas, parks etc until the economy recovers. Do not charge

residents more fees, taxes, as we are not seeing increases in our income. Be realistic in keeping the problems of the citizens in mind when budgeting to spend money on projects that are not absolutely necessary.

Stop policing yards where cars are parked - it's only grass, it will grow back.

Stop putting chlorine in the water. It is a poison - says so on the trucks.

Stop raising rates on water/sewer usage. Highest in county.

Stop wasting money and creating boulevards. The additional cost to maintain is unnecessary, and you will be taking them out within 10 yrs. Who approved the costs?

Streamline existing services. Counteract the shrinking tax base.

Street lights not working on Portage in front of Pfizer.

Street repairs are needed on eastbound Centre, between Portage and Sprinkle. Excellent City Hall staff and very satisfied with dedication of commissioners and mayor - a great place to live and raise a family!

Streets are in poor condition (lakeshore). Lighting at intersection needs improvement.

Streets curbs and gutter pan need work. I spent \$4,000 to replace my driveway. The city won't replace my gutter pan?

Stricter enforcement on loud bass in apartment building.

Studies may indicate when it is more cost effective to replace rather than repair schools. I have had a hard time, however, accepting the grandiose, showy, pretentious buildings Portage schools have built lately. When making a left turn at an intersection where traffic is divided you cannot see oncoming traffic.

Sweep the roads. Sweep and maintain bike lanes along the roads. Remove snow from paved bike lanes along the roads. Remove snow from paved bike/running/walking trails. Get the public schools to remove pay for play. Fix the roads.

Take council meeting to sites other than city hall. Got to coffee shops, restaurants, etc. I believe more people would attend.

Talent show was simply 'outstanding'

Tell the parks department "well done"

Thank you for asking for our opinion. Please keep curbside recycling, spring clean-up, leaf pickup, snow removal. Hard to remember it's every 3 months. On cul de sac, consistent pushing of snow to middle and not outside edges of street would be appreciated. Much better than it used to be - lights timed well

Thank you for the extra brush services during the storms! My family and I struggle with driving onto Milham from our neighborhood during busy hours. Many near misses with accidents (Peachtree and Milham)

Thank you for printing the survey on both sides of the paper - go green!

Thank you for filling the pot hole in front of our house.

Thank you for soliciting our opinions on these important topics. We hope our children have the opportunity and desire to return to Portage after college and settle here. Keep up the good work.

Thank you for the opportunity to complete this survey. This survey shows me there is true concern and consideration for the citizens and I encourage you to offer this again

Thanks for asking for input. Encourage sidewalks in future development. With distracted drivers it's too dangerous to be in the bike lane or running alongside the road!

Thanks for asking. All of the tree/planting areas down the center of our streets make snow removal difficult. Had a lot of leftover snow in the turning lanes because of this - accidents waiting to happen. Leaf pickup company left messes on every street.

The city must become more self-sufficient. We need to promote front yard gardens. This silly front yard grass is such a waste of gasoline. We need trolleys to take people to the malls or promote neighborhood stores. Cable access is a wasted service. It could be used to promote and help develop many things. The commission needs to promote local restaurants. At least Kalamazoo has good restaurants. There is a hidden racism as illustrated by Hussain Turk's recent letter to the Gazette - that must be addressed.

The city overall provides a very high quality as well as a wide range of services.

The city provides a lot for the citizens, but I also feel that the younger generation should be considered in future planning as they have always been.

The city should be able to fine property owners, who do not take care of their dwellings, (painting, driveways resealed, roofs fixed or replaced, lawns cut, shrubs trimmed). That would solve the problem of ruining the appearance of the whole neighborhood.

The collegial relationship between the city manager and city council benefits all citizens

The contractors who do mowing, pickups, maintenance do not do the good quality jobs your actual city employees did.

The corner of Centre and Garden Lane. Turning right onto Centre from Garden Lane, one must pull out into Centre to see if traffic is clear. High brick wall, telephone pole.

The deer are overpopulated in the area and are coming in herds into my yard. I've had to tear out all my hostas and they've ruined much more of my landscaping. Something needs to be done

The deer population has exploded in our neighborhood (Wedgewood Dr.) and is becoming a real challenge to have any landscaping/gardens. Need to address this growing population. Soon

The drain in front of my house is absolutely worthless. A normal rain and there is a lake on the street even though we try to keep it clear.

The government needs to concentrate on representing the good of entire city, not just South Portage.

The improvement of Sprinkle is great. I live on Long Lake Drive and it is terrible.

The main police answer here is, "we don't handle that!" We don't understand.

The only problem I have is controlled fires. There are four properties that I can see and smell from my home that have fires summer or winter. I can't have my windows open even in good weather. Something needs to be done about these fires. This is about to make my decision to move out of Portage after 30 years. It is a problem and it needs to be fixed.

The person in charge of traffic lights needs to do a study of his job. I've waited as long as 3 minutes for a light. Sometimes through 2 cycles.

The police should check on the parking on lawns ordinance. It is on the end of Dawnlee Avenue.

The Portage responsibility fee should be illegal. It's an added burden in an already difficult situation and is the largest complaint that I hear about the City. It's a deterrent to a younger demographic

The removal of trees and brush that block a clear vision of the vehicles on streets and roads. There's a lot of areas which have limited views where streets meet.

The speed limit on Sprinkle south of Centre is too high. There are many homes with children and pets between Centre and S. Ave. This is also a bus route area. I shudder watching children wait for their bus as semis and autos barrel past at higher speeds than 50 mph. The residential areas of Sprinkle should be no greater than 40 mph - more police to deter speeders in this section would somewhat mitigate this.

The superintendent buyout was a ridiculous waste of taxpayers money. Giving in to Kalamazoo Valley Church (otherwise known God Mart) was really a large mistake. How could you condone that monstrosity?

The traffic issue in our neighborhood needs to be addressed. Traffic on Rockford and speeds on Starbrook. Someone will get hurt by speeding traffic.

The trend of current city government is to impose rules and restrictions, which if allowed to evolve at the current pace, will seriously impact the future growth of the community. While I agree that reasonable rules and restrictions are necessary for a vibrant community, common sense needs to prevail.

There are a lot of extremely talented people, just waiting for opportunity. Portage is becoming "boring" - only chain restaurants and "been there- done that" activities. Look what Art Prize and the Kalamazoo Promise are doing for nearby communities. Wake up Portage - create something. We're giving you our hard earned money. Ask the community for more specific brainstorming ideas. Create a challenge in the high schools. I bet they'd come up with some great ideas - and it would give kids more to do than party and do drugs.

There are too many pathways that are not being utilized enough to justify the community to keep paying for the resurfacing and maintenance.

There are two suggestions I have to resolve the problem of damaged lawns, and to spend city funds in a much more efficient way: Direct residents to place their brush in the street. The same as with the fall leaf pickup. Then there wouldn't be any problem with damaged lawns. Or, direct residents to place their brush on the area between the sidewalks and curb and have one crew in the pickup trucks in front of the crew and pull the brush into the street. Then the 2nd pickup truck crew can follow the crew and clean up and actually put the small stuff in the pickup trucks, to actually clean up the mess, rather than ignore it or redistribute it. That way, the mess left behind won't mess up the street sweeper or clog the storm sewers. A win-win for everyone. And the guys driving around in the pickup trucks can actually do work that they're being paid for.

There seems to be an increase in parking of multiple cars, camping trailers and boats in people's yards - this adds to unsightly clutter.

There should be more effort to employ or create jobs for high school age children over the summer. Street cleaners swing wide and do not clean the entire of our street. Think about what you are doing but do a good job

This is a very good place to live if you are retired. Young people have little job opportunities or prospects for the future. Cutting taxes won't fix this issue, only will end up degrading the city!

This may seem minor, but the number of deer in Portage's open areas (Lover's Lane between Centre and Milham may be the worst) needs to be greatly reduced. Bow hunters may be the solution.

This questionnaire is too vague to produce valid results.

This questionnaire needs to be more detailed. Thanks for asking. I am proud of Portage and how you have stayed within our budget! We think this is a great place to live. Thanks. This survey might be done online also.

Those who wish to raise food animals of any sort should live outside the city limits. City is for domestic/house pets

Time to raise level of the wall since the new I-131 and I-94 exchange has been put in. It is impossible to sleep with open windows in my neighborhood. Many residents are unhappy.

To save money, I would recommend you not waste money on paper, envelope, ink, employee time and postage for the letter about the survey. Just send out the survey.

Too concerned with providing services to the rich sector.

Too many expensive services to make people feel secure. Too many police and firemen. Too many plows spreading way too much salt. The roads are white with salt. Reduce services because tax base will fall. Thank you for your time too. Loud trains in middle of night. On the horn for 10 seconds at a time. Loud fire trucks made a senior citizen friend of mine deaf. Wakes us up

Too much salt!! Good job plowing

Too much spending on items wanted, but not needed.

Too much traffic congestion

Traffic flow on Portage and Westnedge – traffic lights make it nearly impossible to drive economy-friendly; once one turns green, the next one turns red as you approach it (following the speed limit); many traffic lights should be turned off at night (new high school light)

Traffic is an issue especially from Thanksgiving to Christmas in the Mall area. Differences in what Central is given compared to Northern. It's very obvious to all Northern students and parents.

Traffic issue in our neighborhood needs to be addressed. Traffic avoid Rockford and speed on Starbrook. Someone will get hurt by speeding traffic.

Trash company drops stuff all over the street and just leaves it. Would prefer a recycling garbage container

Trucks usually leave a mess in the streets after pickup. They are not very interested in picking up all leaves and leaving areas clean

Trying to please special interest groups is not good for a community as a whole. Attitude and dealing with internal budget has to change. Individuals have had to make adjustments and sacrifices to survive on a daily basis. I suggest you cut back on internal frills. I have seen roads and streets that have been poorly surfaced and in a couple of years fall apart. Quality of contractor is bad. If they do a bad job, they need to redo work.

Unpaved trails sometimes are ignored for long periods of time, why keep building trails and then not maintain them?

Use PA 198 wisely, businesses that bring money into the city from outside the area are incredibly important to the city's economy. Too often you employ the strict policies and practices of the past to eliminate opportunities (job killer). There is nothing wrong with using PA 198 for existing Portage businesses. Why wouldn't you do something to aid the competitiveness of a local business? Stop thinking so narrowly, start thinking about helping businesses win! Very concerned about money spent on the roundabout at 12th and Milham. Think this will cause chaos at early morning and evening traffic. Seems like a lot of money when a simple timed light

would have been better.

Using loose gravel to maintain Sprinkle - every year our cars are dinged up by this process. Is there another way?

Very concerned about traffic safety on Westnedge between Romence and Target. Anyone trying to turn left from or to Admiral, Best Buy, Carrillon Center are in constant danger of being hit.

Very concerned about our public schools. The interim superintendent is not qualified for the role and the board is ineffective. Our schools are not as competitive as other larger towns that may attract jobs. It will be the reason we will move out of Portage within the next year.

Very happy to live in Portage.

Very nice community offering many services and programs.

Very slow to clean the neighborhoods while trucks continue to go up and down Westnedge even after they remain clear

Violation of red lights and stop signs.

We are doing well. Never a problem Good job with pickup and cleanup. There is a bump on the west south side of my street, every time a truck with a trailer passes, it makes a loud bang. They patched it up once/long ago, but they only made it worse. Where they put the city water and sewer in my well went dry. Speed limit should be put up a little.

We are proud to live in our neighborhood (e.g. block parties) and with our neighbors who watch out for youngsters and seniors. We are active in the PSC and the library and enjoy concerts at Overlander and/or in the schools. It is our feeling that we are safe and that the leadership in governing Portage is constructive, able and caring. We like the changes we have seen in our years here.

We are quite pleased with living in Portage. Previously lived in Kalamazoo

We are taking down old schools and putting up new buildings in their place. In Grand Rapids where I graduated, they are still using the buildings we went to school in and so did our parents. Some were built in the 30's Why?

We believe the present police and fire department are excellent and would like to see this continue - we feel protected and know this is a great place to raise kids and families.

We could not see over bushes when we had to turn left from Garden to Lovers Lane - had to pull way out into the street - but nothing was ever done about it. That sign still is in the way for me. I am 5'5" sitting in a regular car, not up higher like a truck. I suppose that when someone checked out my request they were probably taller and sitting higher in a truck.

We enjoy living in Portage

We enjoy the area. Please keep it good for our children and grandchildren.

We have a lot of empty houses in our neighborhood and four to five people don't keep their lawns cut.

We have enjoyed living here for many years and are proud of the city.

We have lived in many towns and cities. We like Portage as it offers many big city advantages (WMU, K-College) recreation trails, parks, and safety and cleanliness of a small town. Thanks, we enjoy 4th July Fireworks.

We lost power 3 times this year. I have called the city four times to have the curbside tree trimmed. Still no one has come out. Snow plowing on side streets in some cases was over 72 inches before the street was cleared.

We love it here, and chose Portage to live in even though my wife and I both work in Battle Creek. It's safe and family-friendly, but we wish there were more opportunities for adult enrichment.

We love living in Portage. The schools are wonderful, and we really enjoy the trails, parks, and library.

We moved here 2 yrs ago from "the country." I love living nearer to shopping, and all the other amenities Portage has to offer. There's not the urban feel, which is good

We need a city pool

We need to be honest on tax assessments and request a millage increase to offset tax base loss.

We need to be securing more manufacturing jobs that can support our retail businesses.

We need some type of art gallery for local artists (more than the library) something to draw people in to our community . We don't need another restaurant

We were impressed with sidewalk replacement and cleaning. Great crew.

We would like to see a project to add a sidewalk next to the boat launch on the south end of Long Lake. Many pedestrians with consistent traffic and low visibility.

We've had good planning and government in Portage. Congratulations

Well managed city.

What are you doing with the old Portage Bikeway signs? Can I have one?

When picking up leaves or brush, don't tear up lawns and dig holes in them

When the highway is finished, please do not put the fence back up between the Trail and Lovers Lane. Very useful access for me

When they voted to raise sales tax that was to leave property tax alone. So what's this tax increase?

Whenever it rains really hard, Moorsbridge near Muirfield floods significantly.

While I feel that city employees try to do what they feel is a good job; it seems that common sense is often lacking. This is particularly evident in the design of major streets, speed limits, right turns on red, light cycling

While living in Portage is great, I have found that there is no sense of community here. There is no central "downtown" feel to it. Instead there are isolated neighborhoods and no feeling of belonging. To travel around takes a lot of driving on major traffic-clogged roads because each neighborhood is not connected to the neighborhood next to it. That should be fixed.

Why did you raise my assessed value last year when home prices are going down?

Why are the water bills so high? I know Kalamazoo bills are not nearly as high.

Why do I have to pay to put my boat in Austin Lake? This a county managed facility

Why should all the heavy trucks and cement trucks used for all the building of homes and condos beyond Calico, use Calico most of the time. We are getting cracks in the street. When it comes time for repair they will pay nothing. The street was meant for residential traffic.

Widen Westnedge, bury unsightly power lines, restrictions needed for business signs to make Portage upscale community.

Winters Drive between Portage and Lover's Lane is in horrible condition. I commute via bicycle from Woodbridge to State Farm every day and this street is tearing up me and my bike. I ride all over and it must be the worse street in Portage.

With the construction at Westnedge and I-94, please make sure that it is easy for everyone to understand who has the right of way to avoid accidents, unlike the new roundabout

at Milham and 12th. Grand Rapids has larger trash bins and they receive a reward for recycling. I think more people would recycle.

Worst response of snow plowing and ice melting of any city I have ever seen. (Kalamazoo is much better). Lives are at risk. Too many power outages. Roundabouts are bad idea.

Would appreciate more free band programs. Thank you for keeping Portage so attractive. Thank you for at last trimming the bushes at the corner of Lovers Lane and Garden Drive
Would be nice to have traffic light on Roanoke. Hard for traffic to get in and out
Would like covers for recyclable containers to prevent wind trashing of yards.

Would like to be informed more of crime which must occur in Portage. Not knowing gives citizens false sense of security - we need to be reminded to be alert and aware of potential dangers.

Would like to see more complete public transportation on the NW side of Centre St. Portage is so long and narrow walking is hard. Snow plowing by the city often blocks the end of my driveway – after it's been cleared. Maybe because I'm on corner, the city plows run the whole length of the street and dump it on the corner.

Would love to have a "downtown area"

Would love to see incentives to get vacant homes occupied again. Can really be a danger to the neighborhood. Maybe some way to market those to the community?

You do a good job overall. Celery Flats, Portage Creek trail are awesome!

Your city council is the most underhanded bunch of idiots ever I have had contact with. A handful of people were picked for the Oakland Drive assignment and then passed an amendment for all citizens to help pay for all future repairs to street. My four children all went to Portage schools, and for that I am grateful, but to even suggest anyone to move here now what a joke. I would move but I have too much invested here.

You should contact the home owner before responding to a letter from a neighbor who complains instead of just sending a letter and giving a dead line. You should also include the name of person who wrote the complaint, not keep it anonymous.