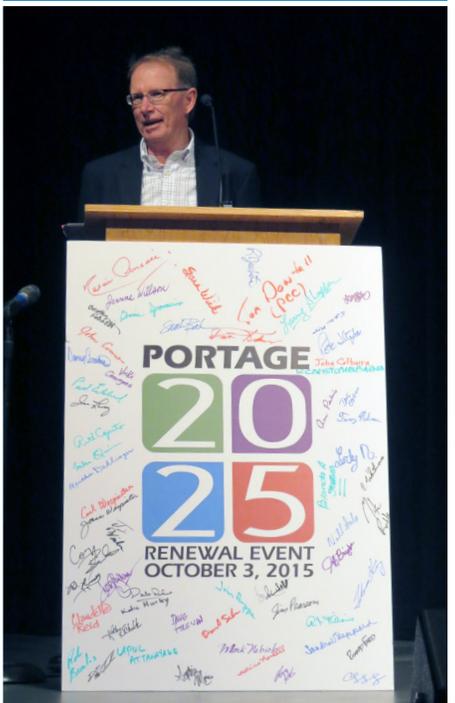




PORTAGE
20
25
RENEWAL EVENT
OCTOBER 3, 2015



FINAL REPORT





Table of Contents

- Introduction 2**
- Participants 3**
- Acknowledgements 4**
- Portage 2025 Visions 5**
- Overview 6**

- Top Two Goals At a Glance 7**
- Culture & Leisure 8**
- Economic Development 9**
- Environment & Natural Resources 10**
- Human Services 11**
- Municipal Services 12**
- Neighborhoods 13**
- Transportation 14**

- Appendices 16**

In October 2015, a broad representation of Portage residents and interested citizens joined together for the **Portage 2025 – Visioning Renewal Event**. During this event, community members reviewed and renewed past efforts to plan for the future of Portage.

In 2007 a series of **Portage 2025** community forums resulted in a core vision for the City of Portage in the year 2025 and established related visions and goals in seven key areas: Culture & Leisure; Economic Development; Environment & Natural Resources; Human Services; Municipal Services; Neighborhoods and Transportation. In 2008, a **Renewal Event** was held to prioritize top goals and develop implementation strategies. During the 2008 Renewal Event, participants also developed preliminary concepts for a collective vision of the Portage City Centre area.

During the **Portage 2025 - Visioning Renewal Event** held on October 3, 2015, participants were presented with information regarding community accomplishments, changing demographics new trends and concepts in development since the 2007 and 2008 visioning efforts. Participants used the balance of their Saturday morning reflecting upon the information presented while collaborating with fellow citizens to develop revised visions, top goals and strategies for achieving the contemplated future of Portage in 2025.

On behalf of the City Council and City Administration, we are grateful to the citizens that set aside their time for the future of our city. The **Portage 2025 – Visioning Renewal Event** will be actively used to guide and shape the future of the City of Portage.¹

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurence Shaffer".

Laurence Shaffer
City Manager, City of Portage

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter J. Strazdas".

Peter J. Strazdas
Mayor, City of Portage

¹ Additional information regarding Portage 2025 is available at www.portagemi.gov

Culture & Leisure

Monifa Jumanne
Ann Perkins
Don Ramlow
Andrea Stork
Charles Whitmore
Joanne Willson

Mark Nebiolo, Chairperson
Patricia Randall, Councilmember
Kendall Klingelsmith, Staff Liaison

Economic Development

Cory Bailes
Laura Bailey
C. Miko Dargitz
Katie Hurley
Dorothy Robinett

Tom King, Chairperson
Peter Strazdas, Councilmember
Vicki Georgeau, Staff Liaison

Environment & Natural Resources

Martha Dahlinger
Michael Quinn
Daniel Saba
William Saba
R. J. Williams

Ruth Caputo, Chairperson
Jim Pearson, Councilmember
Kendra Gwin, Staff Liaison

Human Services

John Colburn
Tom Dowdall
Ruth Ann Meyer
Sara Wick

Sandra Sheppard, Chairperson
Claudette Reid, Councilmember
Elizabeth Money, Staff Liaison

Municipal Services

Jeff Bright
John Conner
Dan Corradini
Paul Ecklund
James Hoppe

Michael Robbe, Chairperson
Nasim Ansari, Councilmember
Rodney Russell, Staff Liaison

Neighborhoods

Robert Kelber
Janice Livesay
Sophie Morin
David Ostrem
Luke Ostrem
Tim Winslow

Sarah Baker, Chairperson
Richard Ford, Councilmember
Chris Forth, Staff Liaison
Richard White, Staff Liaison

Transportation

Upul Attanayake
Lindy Nebiolo
Kathy Schultz
Bonnie Sparacino
Brenda Ann Stubbs
Carl Wespinter
JoAnne Wespinter

David Felicijan, Chairperson
Terry Urban, Councilmember
Chris Barnes, Staff Liaison

City Council

Mayor Peter Strazdas
Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson
Councilmember Nasim Ansari
Councilmember Richard Ford
Councilmember Patricia Randall
Councilmember Claudette Reid
Councilmember Terry R. Urban

Visioning Steering Committee

Laurence Shaffer, City Manager
Robert Boulis, Deputy City Manager
Mary Beth Block, Assistant to the City Manager
Vicki Georgeau, Director of Community Development
Adam Herringa, Deputy City Clerk
Devin Mackinder, Director of Technology Services

Staff Liaisons

W. Christopher Barnes, Director of Transportation & Utilities
Christopher Forth, Deputy Director of Planning, Development & Neighborhood Services
Vicki Georgeau, Director of Community Development
Kendra Gwin, Utilities Engineer
Kendall Klingelsmith, Director of Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizen Services
Elizabeth Money, Neighborhood Program Specialist
Rodney Russell, Director of Public Services
Richard White, Public Safety Director - Police / Fire Chief

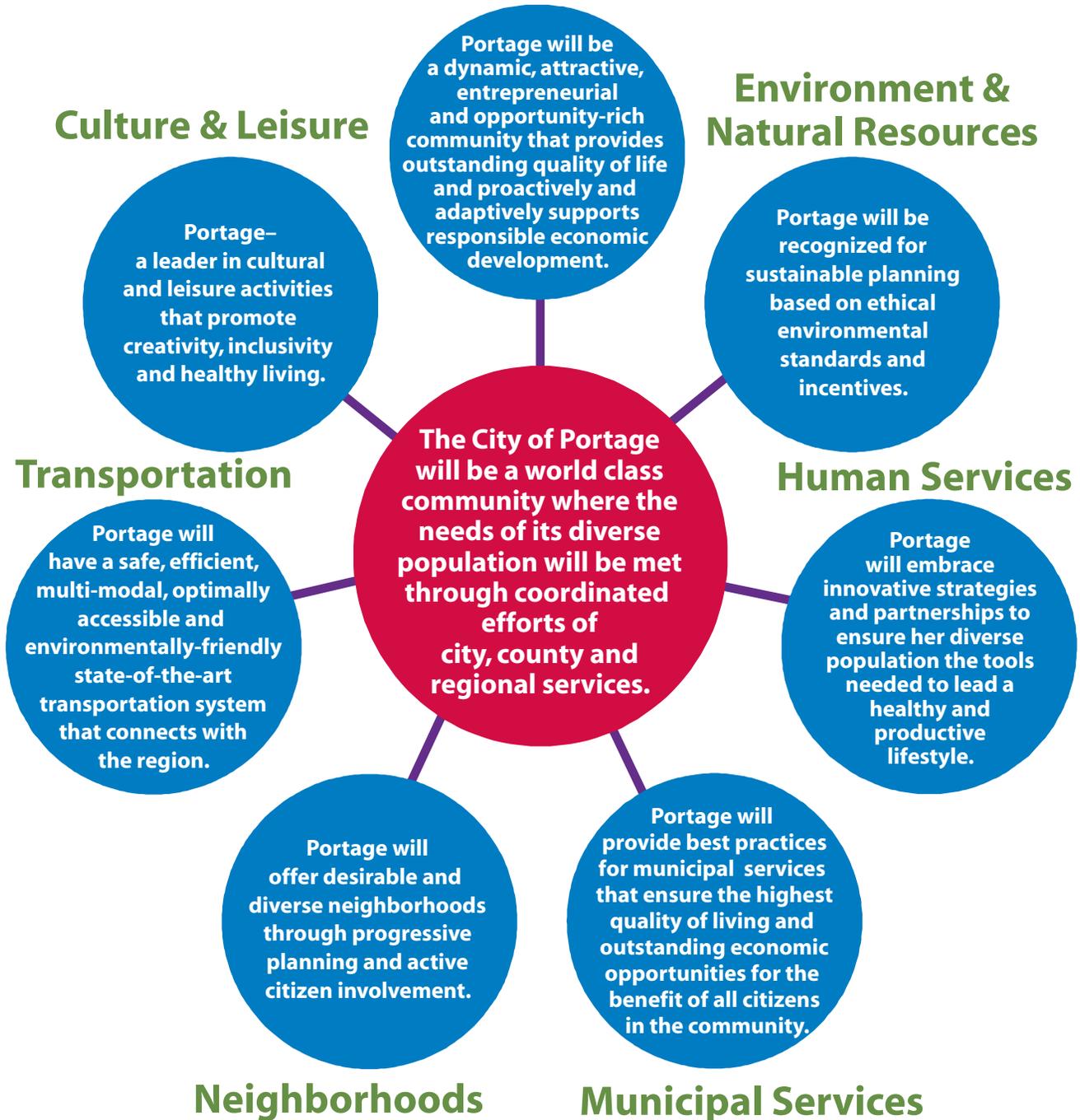
Additional Support

Portage Central High School Staff
Eric Alburtus, Principal, Portage Central High School
Mark Bielang, Superintendent, Portage Public Schools
Nick Eppinga, Public Media Network

Contact Information

Mary Beth Block, Assistant to the City Manager
Phone: (269) 329-4405
Email: blockm@portagemi.gov
Website: www.portagemi.gov
Address: 7900 South Westnedge Avenue, Portage, Michigan 49002

Economic Development



The City of Portage utilized a variety of methods to encourage community participation in the Portage 2025 – Visioning Renewal Event. While invitations were extended to past visioning participants to provide a bridge to prior efforts, broad public outreach was undertaken to draw in new citizen input and perspectives. This resulted in encouraging nearly 60 residents with diverse backgrounds and ideas to join in the effort. Participants were asked to reflect on the work accomplished during the 2007 and 2008 visioning events, but were encouraged to consider what had changed in the community and how the future of Portage may now be different than previously envisioned.

Opening Session

Mayor Strazdas began the day with a warm welcome and recap of the 2007 and 2008 visioning efforts, while City Manager Shaffer reported on the accomplishments relating to Portage 2025 goals, and progress achieved over the past eight years. Anthony Minghine of the Michigan Municipal League, discussed community place making and the ways in which cities are responding to changes in demographics and the economy to remain competitive and desirable places to live, work and play. The presentations by City Manager Shaffer and Anthony Minghine are included as Appendices of this Portage 2025 – Visioning Renewal Event report. Adam Herringa, Deputy City Clerk, concluded the opening session by outlining the planning process for the Portage 2025 – Visioning Renewal Event.

Planning Sessions

As in 2007 and 2008, participants broke out into key topic areas: Culture & Leisure; Economic Development; Environment & Natural Resources; Human Services; Municipal Services; Neighborhoods and Transportation. Each workgroup was provided a Community Snapshot and 2015 Updates to the previously established Top Two and Other Goals report for review (which are also included in the Appendices). After consideration of the background reports and presentations in the opening session, each work group further deliberated and refined, revised or created new visions, goals and strategies for implementation. Following the planning session, workgroup chairs presented the results to all participants.

The remainder of this report documents the renewed visions, top two goals and strategies, and “other goals” developed for the seven workgroups.

Culture & Leisure

1. Facilitate partnerships that support venues for cultural, sports and recreational activities.
2. Expand and improve the park system with four-season activities for all ages.

Economic Development

1. Foster development that encourages a mix of uses that will become community gathering areas.
Live! Work! Play!
2. Retain, grow and attract diverse businesses and talent.

Environment & Natural Resources

1. Pursue regional cooperation:
 - Multiple opportunities for recycling for the entire community (industrial, commercial, residential).
 - Sustainable groundwater vision to protect drinking water quality / quantity.
2. Avoid overbuilding and loss of natural habitat and open spaces through reuse of residential and commercial sites and open space development.

Human Services

1. As a leader in regional cooperation, Portage will maximize resources by creatively sharing funding, facilities and services with community partners: municipalities, businesses, the library, schools, the Portage Senior Center and the Portage Community Center.
2. A full-service intergenerational community system that meets the social, emotional and intellectual needs of all citizens.

Municipal Services

1. Develop and maintain infrastructure for the growth of jobs, population and tax base.
2. Continue to be a leader in local and regional government cooperation to deliver the best services to our community.

Neighborhoods

1. Portage neighborhoods are safe at all times.
2. Protecting neighborhoods by balancing development and neighborhood character.

Transportation

1. A reliable public transportation system for all providing accessibility throughout the region to points of public interest and use.
2. Portage citizens have full access to the city on well-maintained pedestrian sidewalks and multi-use trails, which connect regional trail facilities.

Portage – a leader in cultural and leisure activities that promote creativity, inclusivity and healthy living.

Top Goal #1

Facilitate partnerships that support venues for cultural, sports and recreational activities.

- Assess needs
- Establish priorities
- Explore location(s)
- Identify funding

Top Goal #2

Expand and improve the park system with four-season activities for all ages.

- Solicit community input
- Assess needs
- Establish priorities
- Explore location(s)
- Identify funding

Other Goals

1. Acquire green space for parks while continuing to protect, maintain and enhance the current park system.
2. Create enhanced, lighted, safe, accessible non-motorized trails, integrated with other trail systems and with separation for pedestrians and cyclists and four-season amenities.
3. Continue serving as a viable destination for community activities.
4. Publicize the importance of a quality, accessible park and trail system.
5. Promote culture and recreation as planning and funding priorities.

Portage will be a dynamic, attractive, entrepreneurial and opportunity-rich community that provides outstanding quality of life, and proactively and adaptively supports responsible economic development.

Top Goal #1

Foster development that encourages a mix of uses that will become community gathering areas. Live! Work! Play!

- Ensure that land-use plan, zoning and parcel availability are supported.
- Focus on what we are known for – entertainment, shopping, eating, leisure, recreation and education.
- Foster a vibrant City Centre, Lake Center district and other mixed use node opportunities – disseminate market study data where available and court developers for redevelopment.
- Facilitate easy access, traffic flow and parking through Complete Streets – access for all users: cars, bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Excellent cooperation and facilitation by City Hall.
- Facilitate the creation of mixed use nodes to achieve this goal.

Top Goal #2

Retain, grow and attract diverse businesses and talent.

- Enhanced use of technology and social media to promote economic development in the community.
- Develop “big data” for site selectors to attract and expand businesses (workforce, educational attainment, population, infrastructure and land availability, etc.).
- Marketing, marketing, marketing: promote city as a “Natural Place to Move” and to capitalize on natural aesthetics, exploit strategic location (US131/I-94), guide visitors in with way-finding signs, promote life-science and information technology sectors, emphasize can-do of Portage, market Portage outside Portage and explain what we are.
- Partner with Southwest Michigan First and other stakeholders.
- Attract and keep young and knowledge-based talent in Portage.
- Offer support services and facilities for non-traditional businesses and entrepreneurs (e.g. Makers Space, incubators, speculative buildings).

Other Goals

1. Fully employ a diverse workforce through a dynamic economy.
2. Pursue economic development strategies that respect the environment and set priority on use of existing physical resources.
3. Nurture a small-town feel and sense of community while facilitating access to cultural and recreational amenities.
4. Advance ubiquitous, high-tech infrastructure.
5. Be a leader and partner in intergovernmental cooperation to promote positive economic development.

Portage will be recognized for sustainable planning based on ethical environmental standards and incentives.

Top Goal #1

Pursue regional cooperation:

- **Multiple opportunities for recycling for the entire community (industrial, commercial, residential).**
- **Sustainable groundwater vision to protect drinking water quality / quantity.**
 - Work with business and apartments to develop in-house recycling effort.
 - Recognize entities that promote sustainable practices.
 - Redirect untreated storm water run-off to retention area.
 - Community education promoting ground-water protection and recycling.

Top Goal #2

Avoid overbuilding and loss of natural habitat and open spaces through reuse of residential and commercial sites and open space development.

- City policies that encourage re-use of existing properties.
- Seek funding to pursue state property if it becomes available.
- Encourage more use of open space development concepts.
- Seek alternatives to preserve open space.

Other Goals

1. Protect the environment including flora, fauna, water and especially Portage Creek and Bishop's Bog.
2. Provide measures and incentives for man-made pollution control in cooperation with the entire community.
3. Provide accessible walkable/bike-able community for all including increased pedestrian crossing creation and maintenance on roads and trails in parks.
4. Develop the Westnedge area parking lots as the site of an urban village served by a fixed-route trolley and walkable hub design.

Portage will embrace innovative strategies and partnerships to ensure her diverse population has the tools needed to lead a healthy and productive lifestyle.

Top Goal #1

As a leader in regional cooperation, Portage will maximize resources by creatively sharing funding, facilities and services with community partners: municipalities, businesses, the library, schools, the Portage Senior Center and the Portage Community Center.

- Gather information and evaluate existing programs/services to determine and identify potential city partnerships.
- Identify existing and potential financial resources, including private entity investment.
- Explore sharing of facilities, finances and in-kind resources.
- Establish committee of 2025 participants, Human Services Board, Senior Citizens Advisory Board, Youth Advisory Committee, Portage Community Center, etc., to study above with the support of city staff.

Top Goal #2

A full-service intergenerational community system that meets the social, emotional and intellectual needs of all citizens.

- Build support for the concept to develop facilities and programs to serve an intergenerational audience.
- Support and facilitate engagement of citizens of all ages in civic activities resulting in high-voting rates, active neighborhood associations and watches and increased volunteerism.
- Facilitate the support of caregivers in all types of families.
- Develop broadly-utilized resources, service information and referral systems.

Other Goals

1. Portage encourages and promotes an environment in which her diverse citizens are integrated, included and welcomed within the community.
2. Existing and new housing is fully integrated, inclusive, mixed-income and accessible.
3. Support and partner with other community entities to increase awareness of and deter substance abuse for all citizens.

Portage will provide best practices for municipal services that ensure the highest quality of living and outstanding economic opportunities for the benefit of all citizens in the community.

Top Goal #1

Develop and maintain infrastructure for the growth of jobs, population and tax base.

- Strong infrastructure to support development.
- Development friendly.
- Comprehensive communication/marketing system.
- Actively seek business and investment.
- Incentives – Tax Abatements – Culture/School/Parks.
- Relocation Services – Promote civic pride.
- Community Ambassador Program.

Top Goal #2

Continue to be a leader in local and regional government cooperation to deliver the best services to our community.

- Market Portage to Southwest Michigan First, et.al.
- Provide leadership in shared services – analyze and recommend.
- Increase joint bids/purchases.
- Investigate human resources services and how they can help meet Portage needs.
- Explore a county-wide 2025.

Other Goals

1. Convert all existing above-ground utilities to underground utilities.
2. Encourage innovative stormwater treatments that are environmentally friendly and aesthetically pleasing, such as rain gardens.
3. Continuously enhance excellent delivery of police, fire and EMS services as the city grows. This includes traffic enforcement.
4. Promote excellence in image by creating streetscapes and encouraging the development of additional green space around commercial areas and neighborhoods.
5. Create a friendly walkable downtown area with ample lighting, pathways and benches, incorporating landscaping and rain gardens that integrate with the existing commercial/retail district along South Westnedge Avenue.

Portage will offer desirable and diverse neighborhoods through progressive planning and active citizen involvement.

Top Goal #1

Portage neighborhoods are safe at all times.

- Enhance accessibility for residents to access neighborhood crime information on the web, including a picture and information about the district officer.
- Encourage and maintain a sense of neighborhood ownership including neighbor engagement, crime prevention and elimination of blight.
- Increase police officer presence in neighborhoods through walking/biking as well as periodic neighborhood meetings.
- Police Department to partner with neighborhoods to develop crime-prevention strategies.
- Expand points of citizen contact as technology evolves.

Top Goal #2

Protecting neighborhoods by balancing development and neighborhood character.

- Review existing zoning regulations and revise when applicable to preserve residential character with an emphasis within the transitional area between residential and non-residential uses.
- Review zoning code regulations to allow non-invasive commercial development in neighborhoods.
- Review zoning code regulations surrounded by houses.
- Review zoning code regulations to allow low-intensive commercial uses and residential uses in the same building.
- Solicit neighborhood input regarding desired neighborhood commercial uses and establish a distribution list for use by the development community.

Other Goals

1. Strong neighborhoods promote cohesiveness through communication, concern and involvement.
2. Housing stock is renewed and maintained.
3. Cost-effective future city services meet neighborhood needs while maintaining a low tax rate.
4. Neighborhoods have a variety of housing types with low-impact, nonresidential uses.
5. Condition and availability of entry-level housing meets demand.
6. Portage neighborhoods celebrate and contribute to a readily recognized identity.
7. Intra-neighborhood transportation system.

Portage will have a safe, efficient, multi-modal optimally-accessible, environmentally-friendly state-of-the-art transportation system that coordinates with the region.

Top Goal #1

A reliable public transportation system for all providing accessibility throughout the region to points of public interest and use.

- Expanded coverage of routes to include all quadrants of the city/county.
- Expanded frequency and number of stops.
- Accessible, well-lit and sheltered stops.
- Pursue integration of community vans with existing routes.
- Continually expand community education, including the school system, regarding public transportation.

Top Goal #2

Portage citizens have full access to the city on well-maintained pedestrian sidewalks and multi-use trails, which connect regional trail facilities.

- Expand trailways.
- Neighborhood and regional connectivity.
- Major thoroughfare pedestrian walkways or sidewalks.
- Enforce snow removal ordinances and seek creative solutions to permanent snow removal.
- Every signalized intersection has state-of-the-art technology for pedestrians to ensure safe mobility in high-traffic areas.

Other Goals

1. Create a multi-use Portage Transit Center as an attended facility for awaiting buses and taxis; an hourly express van provides shuttle service to the airport and Kalamazoo Transportation Center; free parking ensures easy access to inter- and intra-city buses, trains and airplanes, facilitating increased usage of public transportation with reduced traffic congestion and auto emissions.
 - Environmentally-friendly and user-friendly transportation system.
 - Parking remains free throughout Portage.
2. Portage has a walkable civic center that connects entertainment, restaurants and retail venues and is connected to trailways and transportation.
3. Portage has a well-maintained street network that provides:
 - smooth flowing traffic
 - easy-to-read signage including block numbers
 - safe street design to protect pedestrians and bicycle traffic
 - cross-access on South Westnedge Avenue
4. New technologies will be evaluated and adopted as they are shown to be affordable and feasible.

Appendix A

Accomplished Goals: 2008 – 2015, Laurence Shaffer, City Manager

Appendix B

Place Making, Anthony Minghine, Michigan Municipal League

Appendix C

Community Snapshot

Appendix D

2015 Updates to Top Two and Other Goals



Visioning Renewal Event

Accomplished Goals 2008 - 2015

October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



Culture & Leisure

- Eliason Nature Reserve – Donation of 123 acres of open space by Linda Eliason
- South Central Greenway – 470 acres
- “A Natural Place to Move” – Recognition of long commitment to parks, trails and bikeways
- 2013 Recreation and Open Space Plan
- Increased investments in trails and bikeways
- Renewed focus on recreational programs

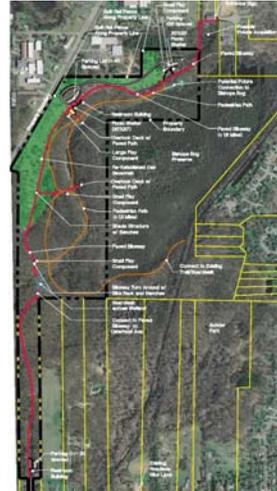
October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



Culture & Leisure

Eliason Nature Reserve Master Plan

Phase 1 Development
Includes South Portage
Trail Extension



October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



Culture & Leisure

Increased Recreational Offerings

- Portage Winter Blast Half Marathon and 5K
- Recycled Art in the Park
- Celery Flats Music Fest
- Family Fishing Fair
- Get Active Portage – Youth Triathlon and Health Fair
- Bicentennial Trail Winter Plowing
- Canoes and Kayaks at Ramona Park

October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



Economic Development

- **Economic development has rebounded since start of Great Recession in 2008.**
- **Value of new construction increased from \$18 million in 2009 to \$80 million in 2014.**
- **Industrial growth and development is up:**
 - Sprinkle Road corridor near capacity
- **South Westnedge vacancy rates are down:**
 - Vacant Kmart Building: Dick's Sporting Goods, Hobby Lobby, Aldi and Jared's Jewelers
 - Former Sam's Club: Dunham's and Sears Outlet

October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



Economic Development

City Initiatives Produce Results

- Industrial development incentives facilitated:
 - ❖ \$77 million in real and personal property investments
 - ❖ Creation and retention of 1,700 jobs since 2008
- DDA incentives facilitated the construction of:
 - ❖ Marriott and Hilton hotels
 - ❖ Creation of 50+ new jobs
 - ❖ Over \$12.5 million in new property valuation

October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



Economic Development

City Centre Area Planning Efforts

- **2008 City Centre Plan**
- **2011 City Centre Mixed Use District**
- **2015 Market Study underway to evaluate demand for mixed-use development**



October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



Environment & Natural Resources

- **Enhanced Curbside Recycling Program**
 - Single-stream recycling launched October 2015
 - Increased recycling participation rates and customer service improvements anticipated
- **2015 Wellhead Protection Program**
- **2014 Comprehensive Plan – Best practices in green development / low impact design**
- **Alternative Fuel in City Fleet Vehicles**
- **Redevelopment of Commercial Sites**
- **Implemented efforts to address invasive species: purple loosestrife, garlic mustard, phragmites**

October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



Environment & Natural Resources

- Garden Lane Arsenic Removal Water Treatment Facility constructed in 2009.
- Ensures safe and adequate supply of drinking water.
- Supplies 5 million gallons of water per day.
- Constructed using LEED Certification Standards.



October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



Human Services

- Created Youth Advisory Committee in 2008
- Actively serve on the Kalamazoo County Substance Abuse Taskforce
- Portage Senior Center offers programming and services to a growing senior population
- Awarded \$100,000 grant for the Kalamazoo County Public Housing Commission Housing Assistance Fund
- Developed Quick Reference Help Guide – Listing of shelter, food and other basic need resources

October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



Human Services

Human Service Funding

- Continued partnerships with human service providers throughout the community.
- Over past eight years, over \$1.2 million has been provided to agencies that provide assistance to Portage residents in need.



October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



Human Services

The Portage Community Center (PCC)

- Over \$4 million in financial support provided to the PCC since its inception in the late 1970s.
- One-stop-shop for human services and centrally located in the City Centre Area
- PCC houses Family Health Center and Head Start



October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



Municipal Services

- **Customer Service Remains Top Priority**
- **City ranks 6th in state for municipal taxes**
- **Portage boasts a balanced tax base**
- **Technology and Communication Strides:**
 - PortageAlert mass notification system
 - MI.Portage app for mobile devices
 - Expanded publication of the Portager newsletter
 - City Hall operations software replaced for increased efficiencies
 - Wi-Fi offered at City Hall, Senior Center and coming soon to Celery Flats and other community parks
 - Improved response to emergencies and natural disasters with use of enhanced technologies

October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



Municipal Services

Local and Regional Collaboration

- Southwest Michigan First
 - ❖ Coordinated economic development efforts
- Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch Authority
 - ❖ Coordinated and enhanced 911 dispatch services
- Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS)
 - ❖ Regional transportation planning and road funding
- Kalamazoo County Transit Authority
 - ❖ Coordinated and enhances public transit
- Kalamazoo Affordable Housing Partnership
 - ❖ Regional planning and housing funding via LISC

October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



Neighborhoods

- **Neighborhood Support Program protects property values and quality of life**
- **Housing Assistance Programs – \$1 million expended since last renewal event to purchase and/or repair of over 100 homes**
- **Neighborhood planning initiatives**
 - Increased protections from high intensity uses
 - Increased flexibility for home based businesses
 - Additional options for mixed-use developments

October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



Neighborhoods

Neighborhood Safety

- Public Safety and Community Development – a coordinated approach to crime and blight
- Public Safety education and outreach
 - ❖ Stop, Park and Walk
 - ❖ Bicycle patrols
 - ❖ National Night Out
 - ❖ Eat and Greet
 - ❖ Neighborhood Watch Groups
- Public Safety Accreditation



October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



Transportation

- **I-94 and Westnedge SPUI**

- Completed in 2011

- **Enhanced Traffic Operations Center**

- Traffic signal interconnection and centralized control

- **New Street Maintenance Techniques**

- Polymer asphalt / geotextile fabrics and increased resources extend pavement life



October 3, 2015 Renewal Event



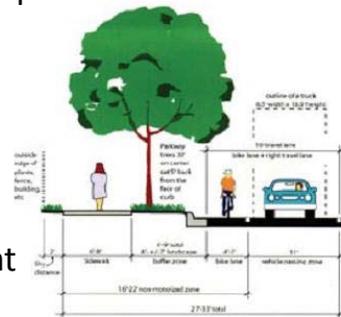
Transportation

- **Complete Streets Policy**

- Adopted by City Council in September 2015
- Consideration of all street users: vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrian, transit users

- **Local Street Enhancements**

- Sidewalk, street trees and lights, drainage improvement with street reconstruction projects
- Enhanced public transit stops; accessibility with shelters



Cross section of a typical "complete street". Drawing Credit: Norm Cox.

October 3, 2015 Renewal Event

Portage 2015 Renewal Event

October 3, 2015

Anthony Minghine, COO & Associate Executive Director
Michigan Municipal League



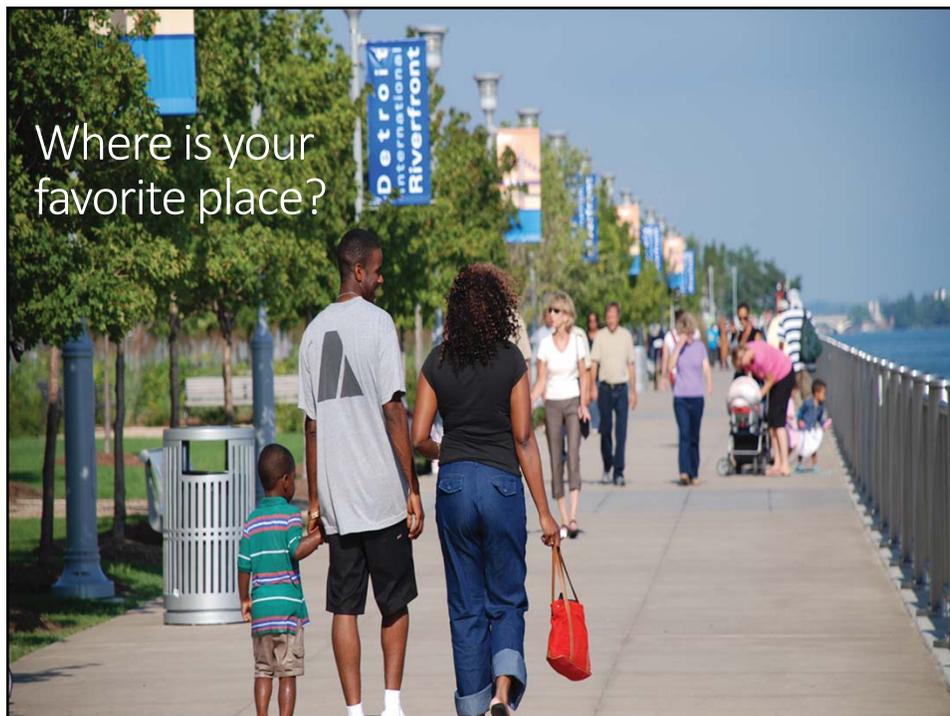
michigan municipal league
Better Communities. Better Michigan.

Portage 2025 Visions



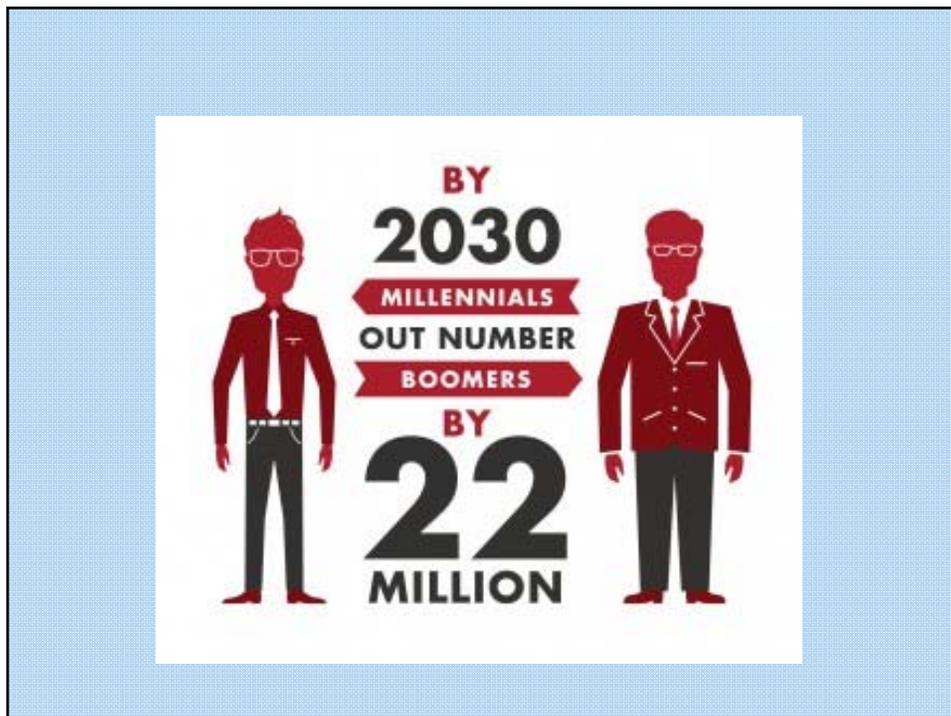
MSU Land Policy Institute Study Impact of Placemaking

Question	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unsure
Increase economic activity.	32%	39%	18%	5%	3%	4%
Improve opportunities for jobs.	33%	36%	19%	6%	3%	3%
Improve the quality of life.	41%	35%	16%	4%	2%	3%
Positively affect home prices.	33%	36%	21%	4%	2%	3%
Enhance the sense of community belonging.	37%	37%	18%	4%	2%	3%
Attract new people to our community.	35%	37%	19%	4%	2%	3%



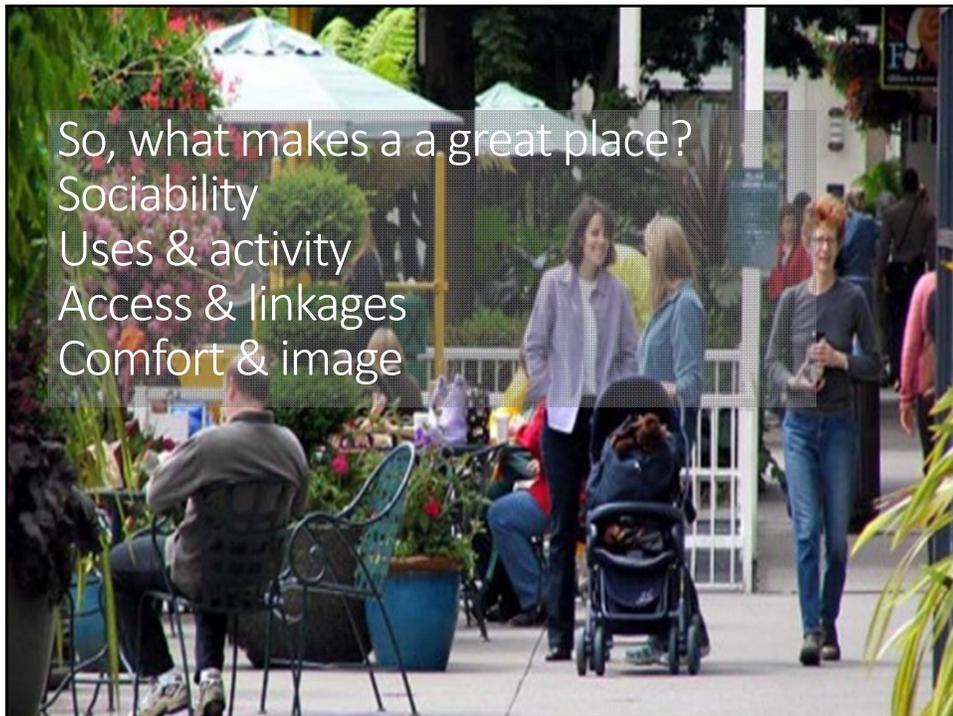
What we know

- Knowledge-based
- Education counts, degrees matter
- Technology allows people to work anywhere; they are choosing the cities
- Mobile population
- “Place” attracts people
- Young people choose where to live first, *then* look for work
- World-wide competition for talent





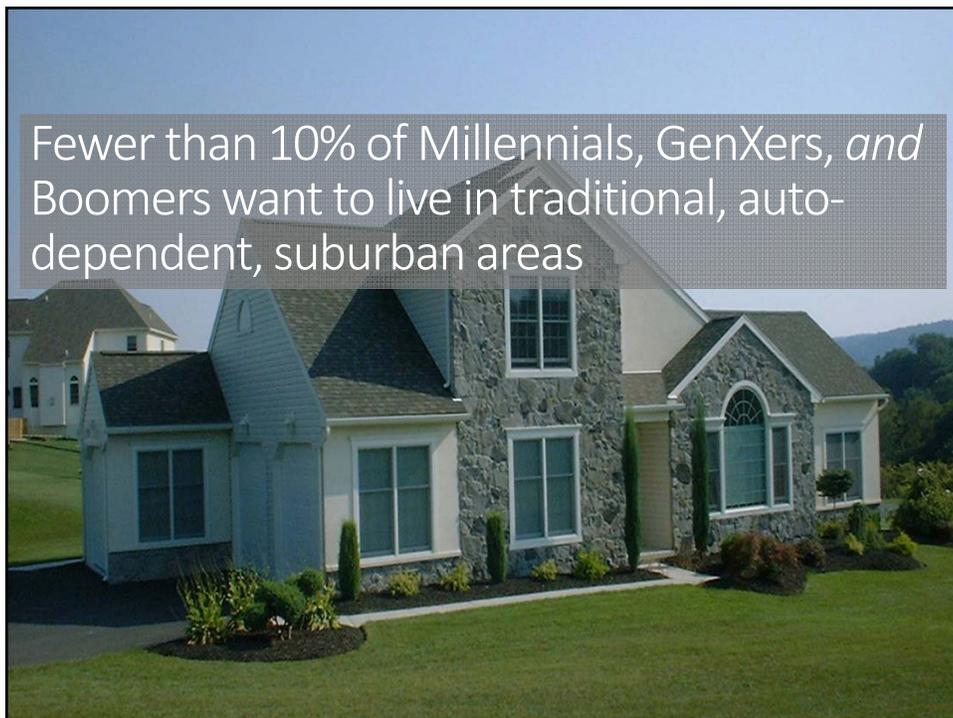
America is becoming more diverse



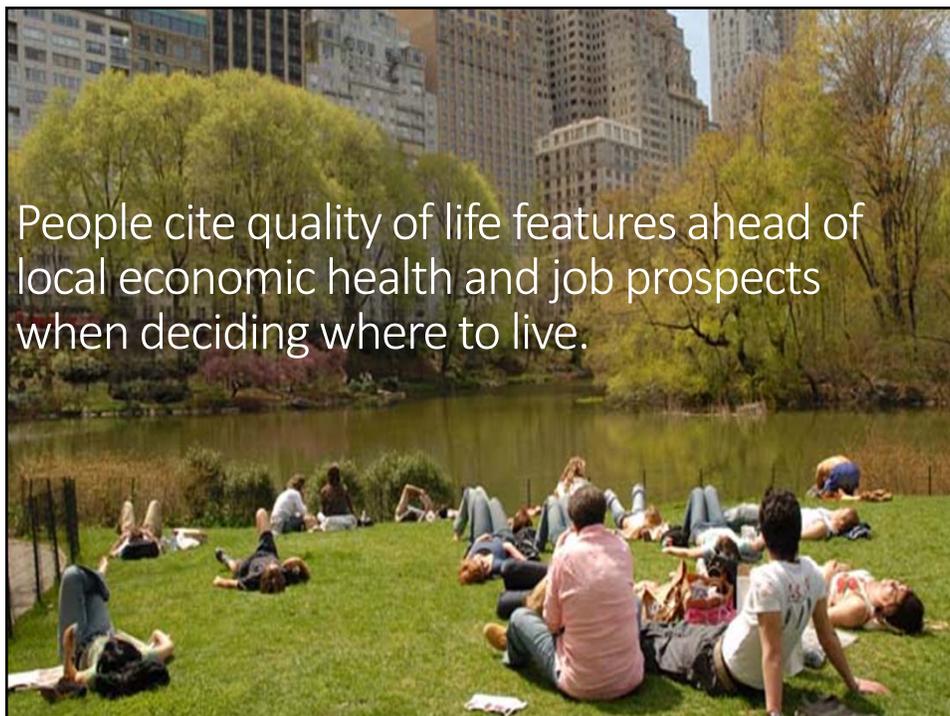
So, what makes a a great place?
Sociability
Uses & activity
Access & linkages
Comfort & image



70% of Americans place a high priority on walkability



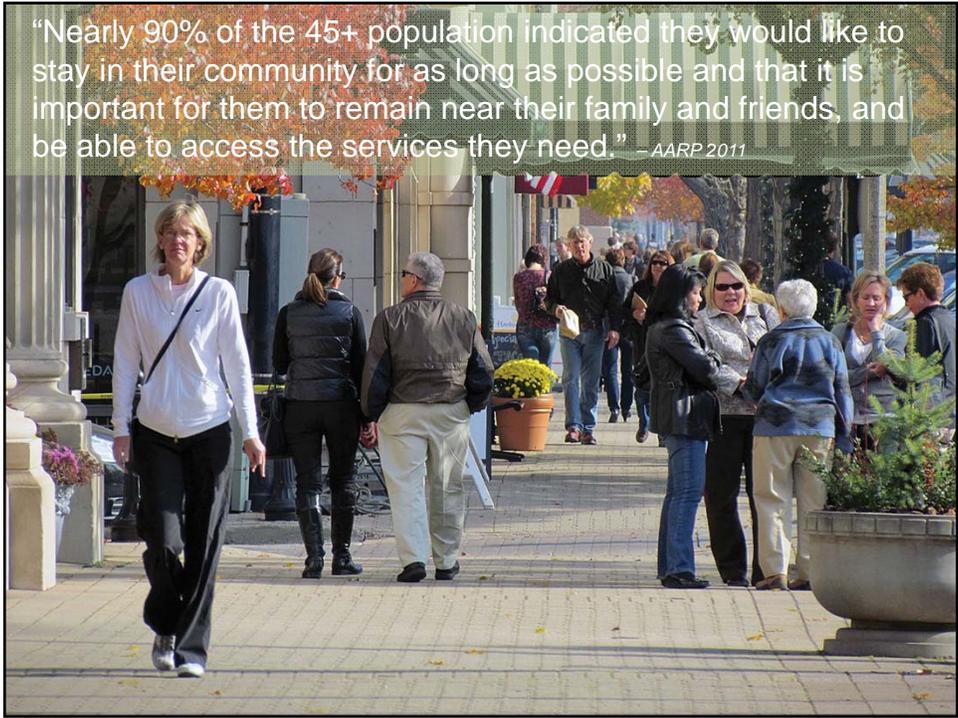
Fewer than 10% of Millennials, GenXers, and Boomers want to live in traditional, auto-dependent, suburban areas

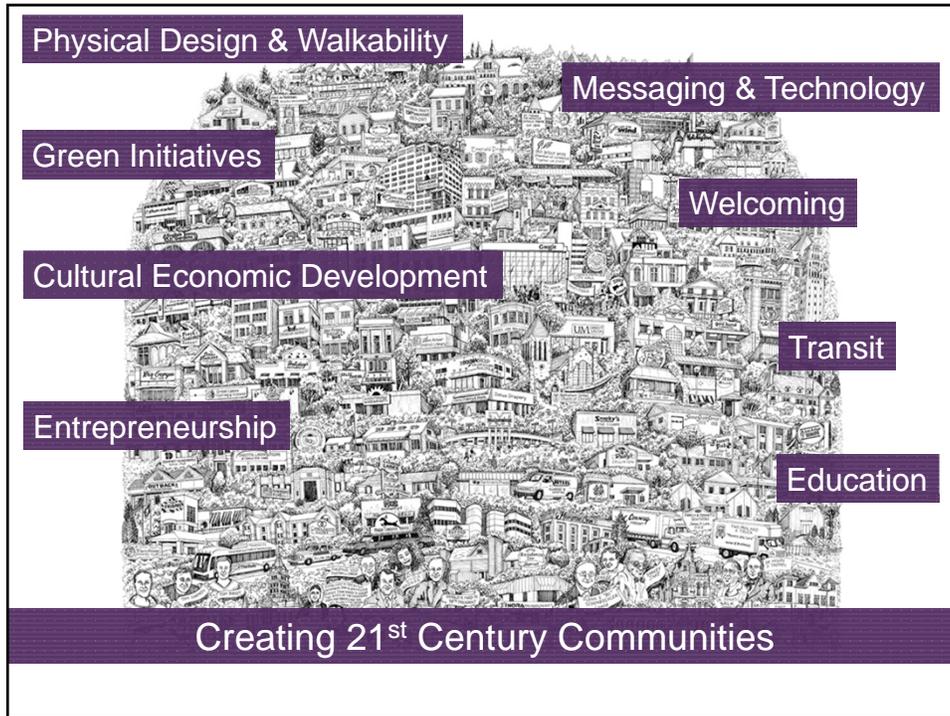


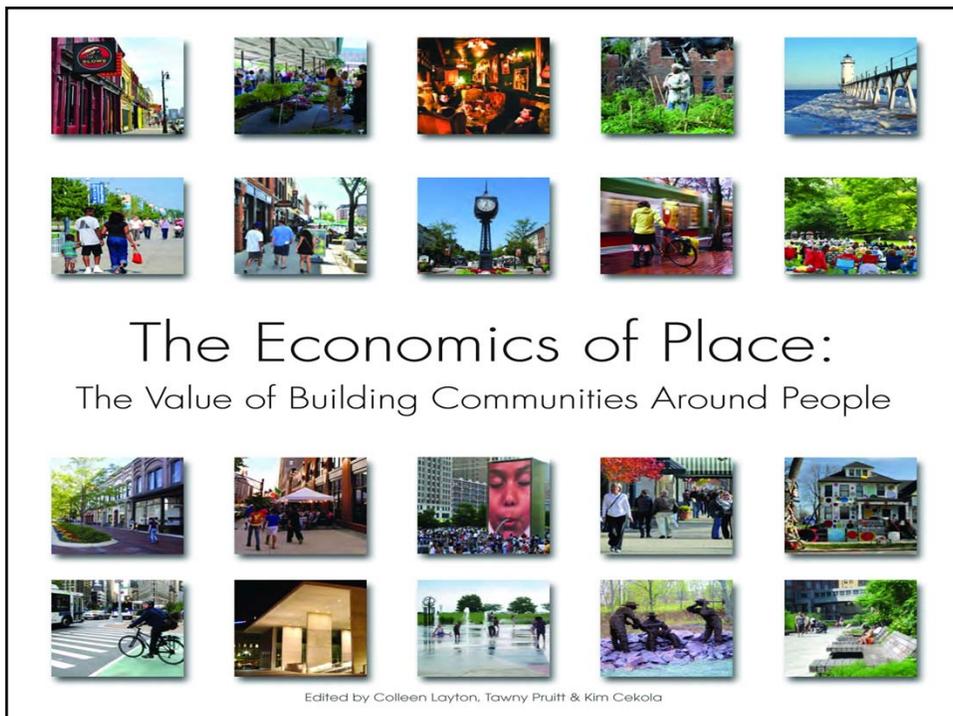
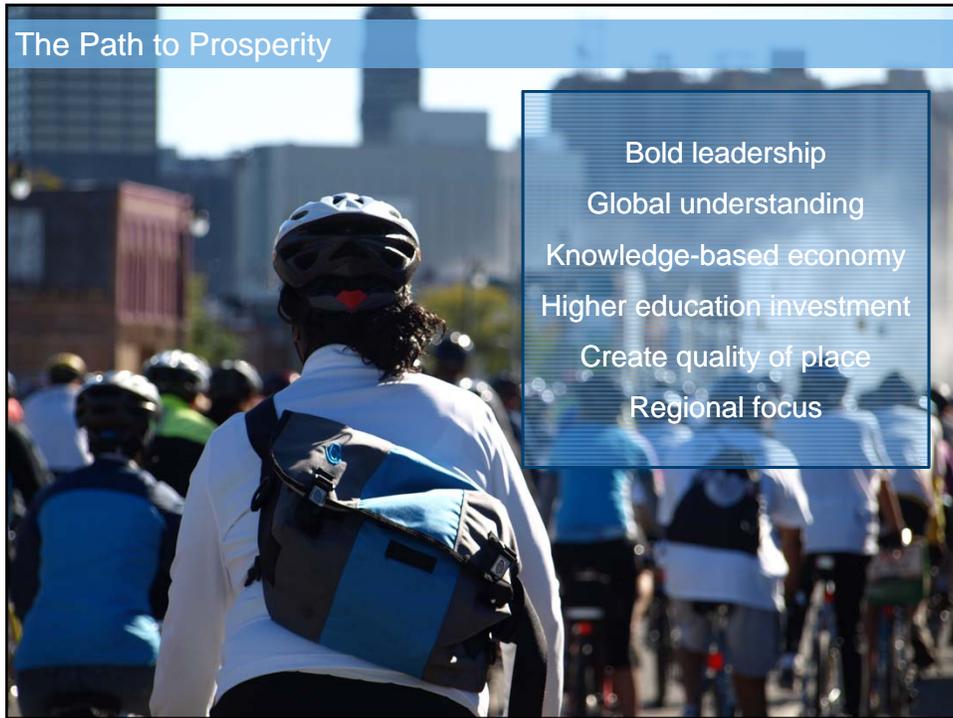














michigan municipal league
Better Communities. Better Michigan.

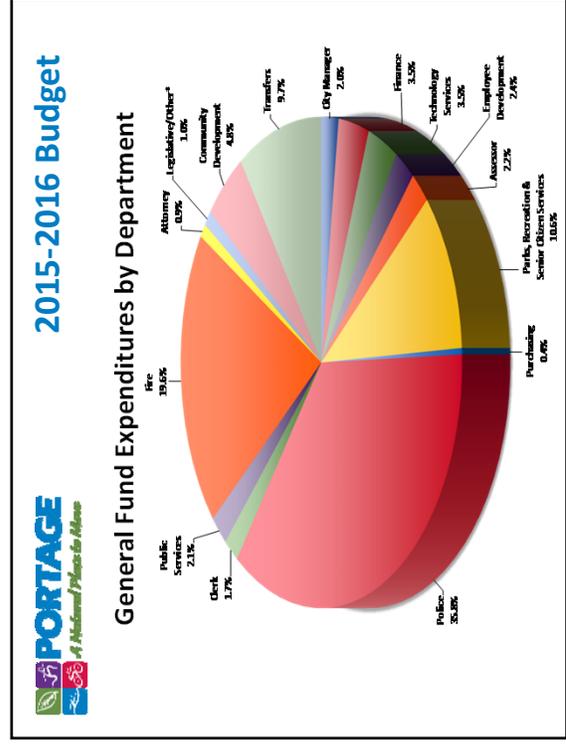
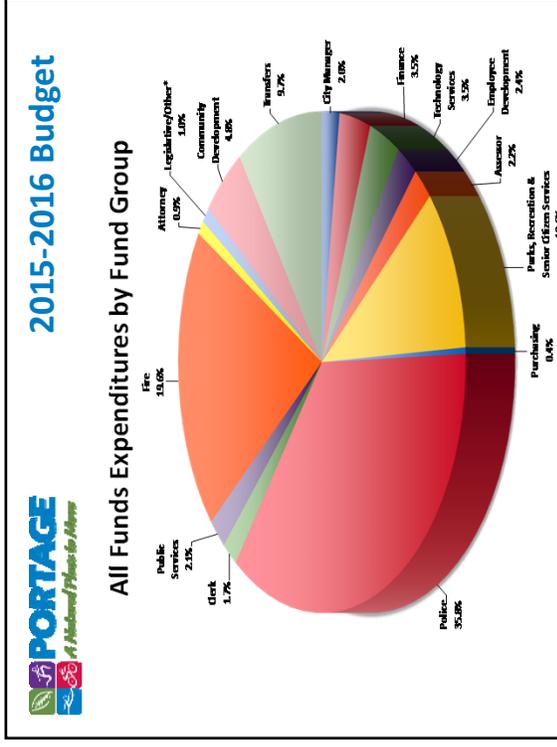
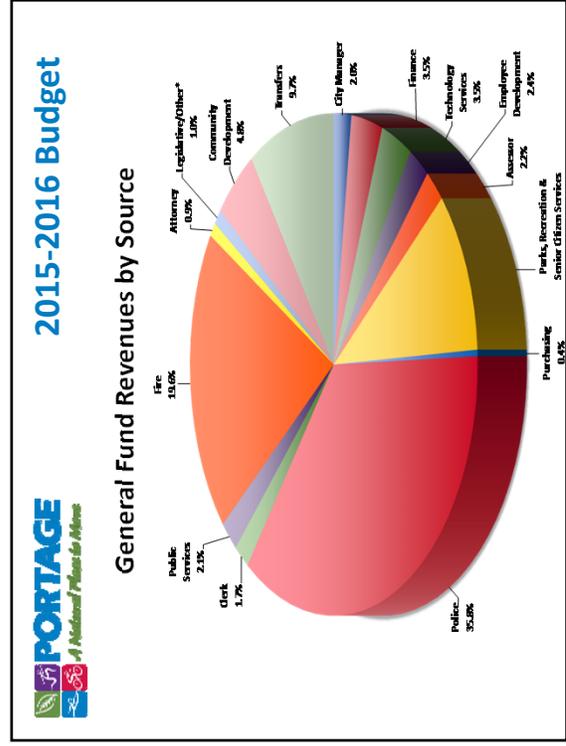
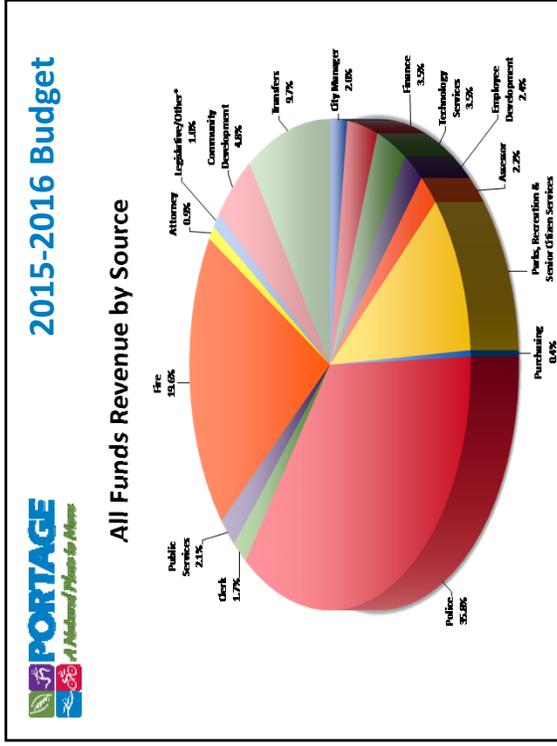
Anthony Minghine
COO & Associate Executive Director
Michigan Municipal League
E-mail: aminghine@mml.org

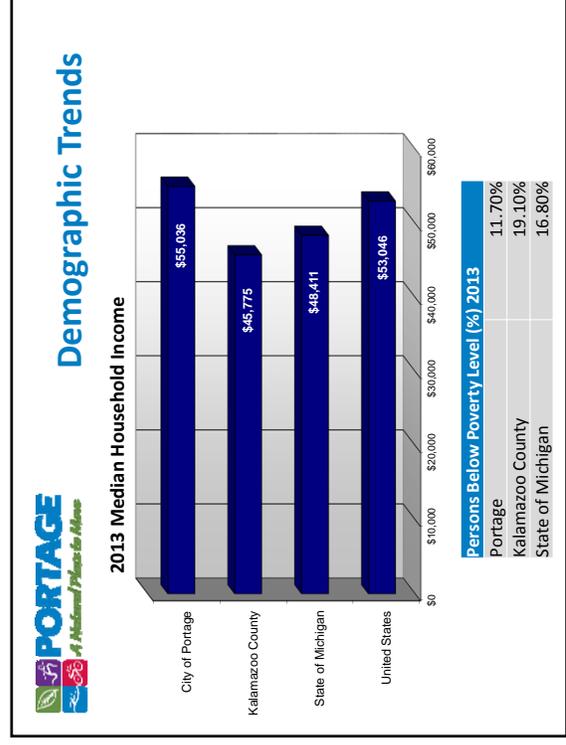
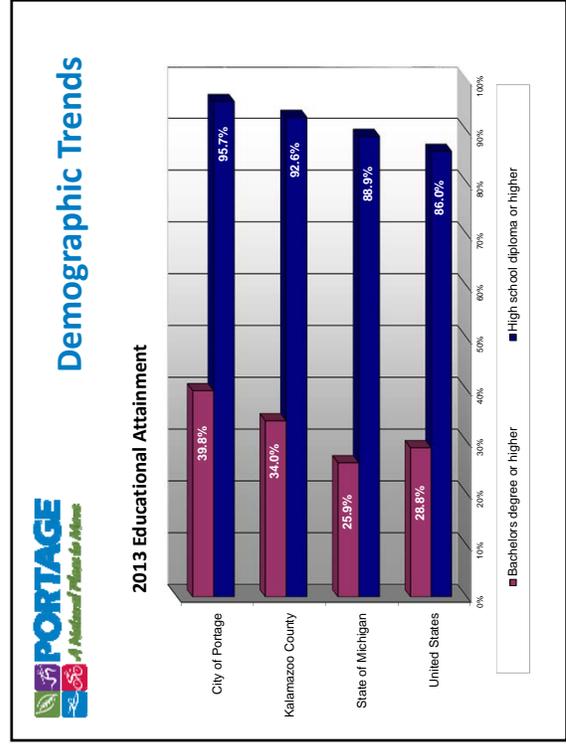
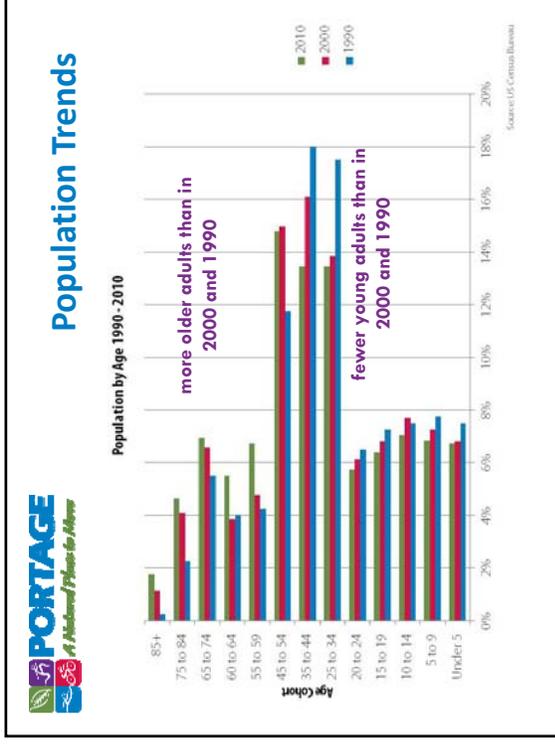
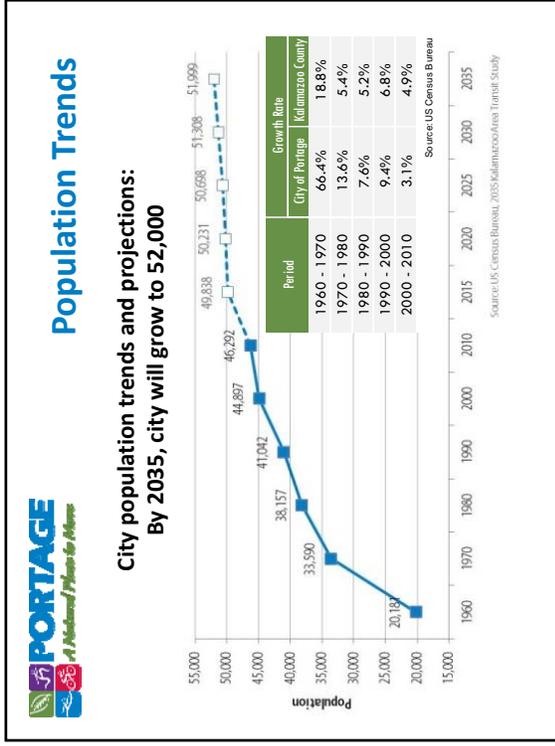


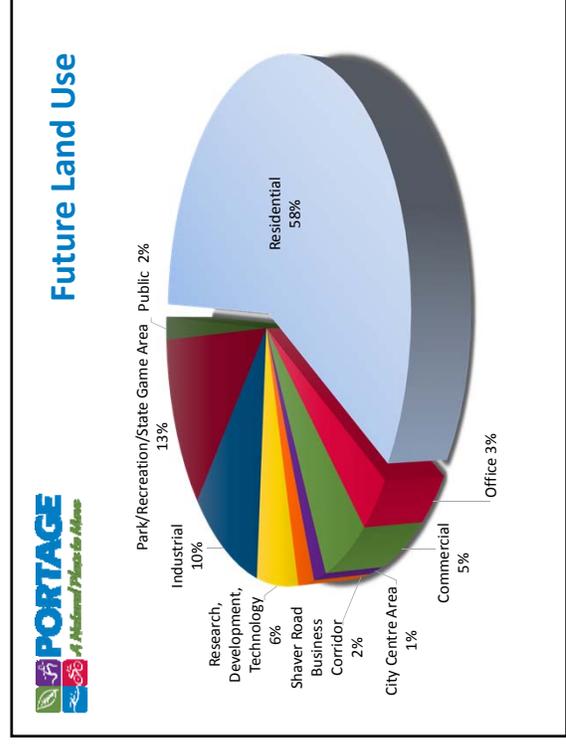
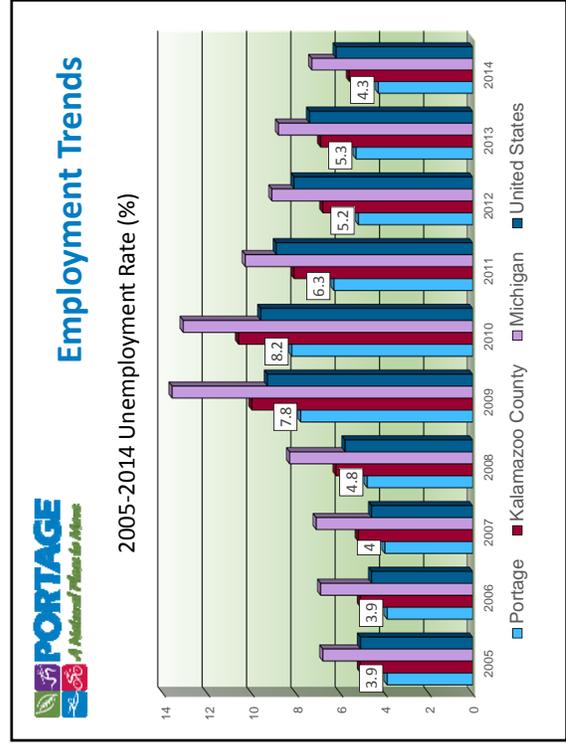
City of Portage

Community Snapshot

October 3, 2015









Municipal Services

Core Municipal Services of the City Portage:

- Public Utilities
- Public Roads
- Public Safety Facilities
- Recreation Facilities
- General Government
- Library Facilities (operated separately from city)
- Educational Facilities (operated separately from city)



Public Utilities

Sanitary Sewer System:

- 231 miles of sanitary sewer
- 55 sewage lift sanitary sewer
- Sanitary system capacity: 10.8 million gallons per day, with average flow in 5.0 million gallons per day

Water System:

- 20 production wells and 247 miles of water mains
- 2 elevated storage tanks hold 2.25 million gallons
- Garden Lane Arsenic Removal Treatment Facility

Stormwater System:

Wellhead Protection Plan and Storm Water Master Plan & Design Criteria Manual – guidelines for private development



Public Roads

Major Streets:

- 72 miles
- 66% in good condition
- 31 miles of I-94 & US-131 – Under MDOT jurisdiction

Local Streets:

- 148 miles
- 27% in good condition

Sidewalks: 136 Miles

Bikeways (shared roadway): 38 miles

Multi-Use Trails: 17 miles

Transit Routes: 7 (48 miles)



Public Safety & Public Facilities

Public Safety	2012	2013
Violent crimes per thousand	1.7	1.6
Property crimes per thousand	36	34
Traffic injuries or fatalities	241	250

- 56% of General Fund budget allocated to Police & Fire
- Community served by 3 fire stations and 1 police station

Public Facilities

- City Hall, Public Services Facility, Senior Center
- Cemeteries: Dry Prairie, Indian Fields & Central
- Leaf composting facility



Parks & Recreation

17 Public Park Facilities & over 17 miles of trails

- Neighborhood Parks: Harbors West; Haverhill; Lexington Green
- Community Parks: Central; Lakeview; Oakland Drive; Schrier; South Westledge; Westfield
- Large Urban Parks: Portage Creek Bicentennial; Ramona
- Special Use Parks: Millennium; Liberty; Veteran's
- Natural Resource Areas: West Lake, Bishop's Bog, Eliason

Private Recreation Facilities:

- South Portage and West Portage little league facilities
- Portage Soccer Complex
- Soccer Zone, Kingdom Indoor Center, Courthouse, YMCA
- PPS playgrounds, fields, gyms, and indoor pools



Environmental Resources

- South Central Greenway: 470 acres of open space / city park land (West Lake Nature Preserve, Bishop's Bog, Eliason Nature Reserve, Schrier and South Westledge parks).
- Bicentennial Trail: 3-mile greenway along Portage Creek
- Six inland lakes: Long, Austin, West, Gourdneck, Hampton, Sugar Loaf and Little Sugar Loaf
- Mandigo Marsh: at southwest corner of Austin Lake
- Gourdneck State Game Area: over 1,500 acres of MDNR land for limited hunting & fishing



During the Portage 2025 Visioning Event in 2007, specific visions and goals were developed for each of the seven key topic areas. During the Portage 2025 Visioning Renewal event in 2008, each workgroup established their *Top Two Goals*, along with strategies to achieve these goals, and affirmed their *Other Goals* for their key topic area.

Since 2008, the City Council and City Administration have used these visions, goals and strategies as a framework for development of City Council goals, the annual municipal budget, the Capital Improvement Program and other long-range planning processes. The following pages serve as an update for participants regarding progress to specific goals established in 2007 and 2008.



Portage 2025 Renewal Event
October 3, 2015
Update to Established Goals

Workgroup Name: Culture and Leisure

Goal 1: Develop a municipal complex for sports, recreation and culture to include: indoor/outdoor facilities, pool, theatre, exhibit space and senior- and youth-friendly activities.

Update:

The 10-year Capital Improvement Plan includes over \$3.325 million in continued investment in community park facilities that provide a variety of sport fields, indoor/outdoor theatre and exhibit spaces, a Senior Center facility, public beach and fishing docks, amongst other amenities.

Goal 2: Expand and improve the park system with four-season activities for all ages (for example, evening activities, pocket parks, dog “bark” parks, golf course, disk golf, and soccer fields).

Update:

1. The donation of the Eliason Nature Reserve to the city by Linda Eliason in 2011 added 123 acres to the city park system that will provide opportunities for active and passive recreation, while preserving important bog and wetland habitat. An additional 18 acres purchased by the city complete this new park facility, which can be accessed from West Osterhout Avenue on the south end and Portage Industrial Drive on the north end.
2. The Eliason Nature Reserve will feature a paved-multi-use trail from West Osterhout Avenue that will connect to the Shaver Road bikeway and Portage Creek Bicentennial Trailway, providing a continuous, five-mile trail running north/south through the city.
3. The West Lake Nature Preserve, South Westnedge Park, Bishop’s Bog and the Eliason Nature Reserve comprise the “South Central Greenway,” totaling over 470 acres of open space and five miles of trails.
4. The 10-year Capital Improvement Plan includes development of a dog “bark” park within the community in 2016. Locations for a dog park are currently being evaluated.
5. In 2013, the city launched the first annual Winter Blast ½ Marathon. To encourage year-round active lifestyles, snow removal from Portage Creek Bicentennial Trail and other city trails was initiated during the winter months.
6. Dedicated Pickleball courts at Ramona Park were completed in September 2015.
7. A Farmer’s Market at the Portage Senior Center, in cooperation with the People’s Food Co-op, will be tested on two Sundays in October 2015.
8. Year-round recreational events are provided by the city including, but not limited to: ice skating at Millennium Park; Snow Party at Oakland Drive Park; Green-A-Thon; Recycled Art in the Park; Family Fishing Fair; Youth Triathlon and Health Fair in Ramona Park, numerous programs and events at the Portage Senior Center, amongst others.

Other Goal #1: Acquire green space for parks while continuing to protect, maintain and enhance the current park system.

Update:

The Eliason Nature Reserve expanded the city park system by over 140 acres, and will provide opportunities for active and passive recreation, while preserving important bog and wetland habitat.

Other Goal #2: Create enhanced, lighted safe, accessible non-motorized trails, integrated with other trail systems and with separation for pedestrians and cyclists and four-season amenities.

Update:

1. The South Portage bikeway extension to connect the Shaver Road Bike trail with East Osterhout Avenue has been approved for Federal Aid, designed and ready for bidding for construction in 2016.
2. The 10-year Capital Improvement Plan includes nearly \$1 million in continued investment and enhancements to the existing bikeway and trail system and proposed a new multi-use trail from Portage Road/East Centre Avenue to Lovers Lane/Garden Lane.

Other Goal #3: Continue as a destination for community-wide seasonal celebrations and multi-weekend themed events.

Update:

1. Renewed investments in recreational programming for citizens of all ages have been initiated over the past year as city finances have improved with a stronger tax base and local economy.
2. Celery Flats is a popular location for special events sponsored by the city and other entities and many city parks are booked for reunions and other private events.

Other Goal #4: Recognize and support the importance and reputation for a quality, accessible park and trail system, arts and culture as planning and funding priorities.

Update:

1. In 2013, concurrent with the city's 50th anniversary, the city initiated a place making initiative and rebranded the community as a "Natural Place to Move" in recognition of the city's past commitment and plans to make continued investments in park facilities, greenways, bikeways and multi-use trails.
2. In 2014, the Recreation and Open Space Plan was updated to reflect the addition of the Eliason Nature Reserve and other park facility plans. The updates to this plan position the city well for securing grant funding for further development and maintenance of community parks.

Workgroup Name: Economic Development

Goal 1: Create mixed-use developments that will become village gathering areas. Live! Work! Play!
--

Update:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the fall of 2008, the city adopted a City Centre Area plan that promotes the development of a vibrant mixed-use area in the vicinity of City Hall. 2. In 2011, the Zoning Code was amended to offer incentives for development within the City Centre Area to incorporate mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly venues. 3. Also in 2011, Zoning Code amendments were adopted to encourage other mixed uses within the city, including Work/Live accommodations and a Commercial Corridor Mixed Use district. 4. The 2014 Comprehensive Plan reiterated the goals of the City Centre Area plan. In 2015, preparation of a market study to assess the demand for mixed-use development, as well as land assembly along East Centre and Brown Avenue is underway. 5. The 2014 Comprehensive Plan also included a new subarea plan for the Lake Centre area along Portage Road, from East Centre to East Osterhout Avenues. This plan also envisions mixed-use development within the area between Austin and West lakes. |
|---|

Goal 2: Retain, grow and attract diverse businesses (e.g., size and type, old and new).
--

Update:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Economic development activity has rebounded and continues to remain strong since the peak of the recessionary period. For example, in FY 2010-11, new construction value dropped to \$18.1 million but rose to \$80.5 million in FY 2014-15. 2. During FY 2014-15, efforts to enhance economic development have been accomplished: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisions to incentives to attract and retain industrial businesses; • Revisions to incentives to facilitate brownfield redevelopment; • Revisions to the Zoning Code to streamline/expedite development review. 3. The 2011-12 Downtown Development Authority project encouraged further development including two new hotels. Additional office, retail and restaurant developments are anticipated. 4. The 10-year Capital Improvement Plan includes over \$130 million in continued investment in infrastructure, public safety, public facility and parks and bikeways that support further economic development and promote the community as a “Natural Place to Move”. |
|---|

Other Goal #1: Cultivate a dynamic economy that fully employs a skilled workforce. Pursue economic development strategies that respect the environment and set priority on use of existing physical resources.

Update:

Various economic development efforts over the past 20 years have resulted in a balanced tax base, local employment opportunities, while maintaining a low municipal tax rate.

Other Goal #2: Pursue economic development strategies that respect the environment and set priority on use of existing physical resources.

Update:

1. The 2014 Comprehensive Plan incorporates best practices in green development and low impact design.
2. Over the past several years, several existing buildings have been re-used/redeveloped such as the former Sam’s Club on Mall Drive; the former Kmart on South Westnedge Avenue; the former Upjohn “Quad” building on Romence Road Parkway; the former Upjohn warehouse facility on East Milham Avenue and the former Mueller plant on Sprinkle Road.

Other Goal #3: Nurture a small-town feel and sense of community while facilitating access to cultural and recreational amenities.

Update:

The “Natural Place to Move” placemaking and rebranding initiative was launched in 2013 as a way to enhance community identity and strengths with regard to recreational facilities and programming that connect neighborhoods and bring people together.

Other Goal #4: Advance ubiquitous, high-tech infrastructure.

Update:

1. The city has established wireless Internet in City Hall and the Portage Senior Center and is currently researching the construction of a public “Wi-Fi” hotspot at the Celery Flats to enhance this location as a community-gathering place.
2. The city has an interactive traffic control center that utilizes live streaming cameras and video detection at major intersections along the major corridors of Portage Road, South Westnedge Avenue, and Centre Avenue. Work is underway to expand the program to the entire city traffic signal network.
3. The city launched PortageAlert mass notification system in 2015 as a means of emergency and other outreach communication with Portage citizens, property and business owners.
4. The City Administration launched various technology upgrades to increase efficiencies in the provision of municipal services.

Other Goal #5: Establish a distinct, identifiable and vibrant city center.

Update:

As noted above, various efforts have been initiated to encourage development within the City Centre Area of the community including preparation of a subarea plan, adoption of zoning incentives and review of market demand for mixed-use development.

Other Goal #6: Be a leader and partner in intergovernmental cooperation to promote positive economic development.

Update:

To ensure regional/cooperative economic development efforts, partnering with Southwest Michigan First has been ongoing and recently strengthened with a formal contract agreement.

Workgroup Name: Environment & Natural Resources
--

Goal 1: Pursue regional cooperation: Multiple opportunities for recycling for the entire community (industrial, commercial, residential); Sustainable groundwater vision to protect drinking water quality/quantity.

Update:

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Single-stream recycling launched October 1, 2015, leading to increased efficiency and use of recycling services within the community and the potential for increased participation. 2. The Garden Lane Water Treatment facility was completed in 2010 to remove arsenic and lead from the municipal water supply. 3. The city joined the Kalamazoo Area Stormwater working group to cooperate on a joint storm water protection mission, to include preservation on groundwater resources and drinking water wellhead protection. 4. The city cooperates in the Kalamazoo River and St. Joseph River watershed groups to promote awareness and understanding of surface water issues. 5. Efforts to remove contaminants from storm water from off-street parking lots and roads before infiltration back into the ground water remains an environmental priority. 6. A latex paint recycling program was launched in August 2015. 7. Increased marketing of the Household Hazardous Waste program, operated in conjunction with Kalamazoo County. |
|--|

Goal 2: Avoid overbuilding and loss of natural habitat and open spaces through reuse of residential and commercial sites and open space development.

Update:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As noted above, several buildings have been re-used/redeveloped such as the former Sam's Club on Mall Drive; the former Kmart on South Westnedge Avenue; the former Upjohn "Quad" building on Romence Road Parkway; the former Upjohn warehouse facility on East Milham Avenue and the former Mueller plant on Sprinkle Road. 2. The Zoning Code promotes a range of housing options intended to preserve open space and natural habitat including "average lot size" and "open space" development options that permit smaller lot sizes in exchange for open space preservation. 3. Street projects have focused on preservation of the existing network in lieu of expansion and widening. |
|---|

Other Goal #1: Protect the environment including flora, fauna, and water and especially Portage Creek and Bishop’s Bog.

Update:

1. As noted above, the Eliason Nature Reserve added over 140 acres to the city park system, preserving important bog and wetland habitat. This land area, together with the West Lake Nature Preserve, South Westnedge Park and Bishop’s Bog comprise the “South Central Greenway” that provides over 470 acres of open space.
2. The Environmental Board launched invasive species control programs for Purple loosestrife, Garlic Mustard and Phragmites reeds.
3. The 2014 Comprehensive Plan encourages green development best practices, such as:
 - adaptive reuse of buildings;
 - managing rainwater at its source with rain gardens, bio-swales and porous pavement;
 - minimizing impervious surfaces and using native plant species;
 - use of alternative energy such as wind, solar and geothermal;
 - providing non-motorized transportation and carpool opportunities.

Other Goal #2: Provide measures and incentives for man-made pollution control in cooperation with the entire community.

Update:

The 2015 updated Wellhead Protection Program provides guidance and direction to businesses and property owners in ways to manage waste streams and storm water disposal in cost effective and sustainable methods.

Other Goal #3: Provide recreational opportunities for all including creation and maintenance of high-quality parks and trails.

Update:

As noted above, the 10-year CIP includes significant, ongoing investments in parks and trails.

Other Goal #4: Develop the Westnedge area parking lots as the site of an urban village served by a fixed-route trolley and walkable hub design.

Update:

The 2014 Comprehensive Plan and amendments to the Zoning Code have been adopted to encourage a mixed-use urban City Centre and additional mixed-use development options are now available within other areas of the community.

Workgroup Name: Human Services

Goal 1: As a leader in regional cooperation, Portage will maximize resources by creatively sharing funding, facilities and services with external (municipalities, businesses) and internal (library, schools, senior center, PCOC) community partners.
--

Update:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The city, Portage Public Schools and Portage District Library launched the “We Get It” partnership, which involves collaboration and sharing of facilities at no or low-costs, and marketing resources, such as distribution of PPS and PDL informational flyers via the <i>Portager</i> newsletter. 2. Portage continues to support/partner with human service entities through the annual provision of General Fund and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program monies. Since 2008, over \$1.2 million has been granted to agencies that provide assistance to Portage residents in need. 3. Significant financial support to the Portage Community Center (PCC) continues through grants from the General Fund and CDBG Program. Since its inception in the late 1970’s, the city has provided PCC over \$4 million in funding. 4. PCC has become the one-stop-shop for human services within the city and houses the Family Health Center, Kalamazoo Head Start, and other programming through Kalamazoo County, including a Loaves and Fishes food pantry, youth programming and more. 5. The city continues to participate on the Kalamazoo LISC Affordable Housing Partnership that prepares regional plans for emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing and affordable housing within Kalamazoo County. The Partnership annually secures nearly \$2 million in state and federal resources to provide safe, decent and affordable housing. |
|---|

Goal 2: A full-service intergenerational community system that meets the social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs of all citizens.

Update:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Portage Senior Center provides a range of recreational and support services to seniors within the community. 2. The Youth Advisory Committee was created in May of 2008 to provide City Council and the community with input in regarding the needs of youth in the city. |
|---|

Other Goal #1: Portage encourages and promotes an environment in which her citizens are integrated, included and welcome within the community.

Update:

1. Portage continues to encourage an inclusive neighborhood/housing environment through continued support of fair housing education and enforcement services to further fair housing choice within the community.
2. The 2014 Comprehensive Plan addresses the need for a range of housing to assist citizens of all ages, as well as encouraging housing maintenance and options for seniors to “age in place.”

Other Goal #2: Existing and new housing is fully integrated, inclusive, mixed-income and accessible.

Update:

1. The Portage Zoning Code permits a range of housing options including: single-family and attached residential dwelling units, manufactured home communities, multi-family housing development and mixed-use and mixed-income development options.
2. The City of Portage has facilitated affordable rental housing development and redevelopment projects through grants from the CDBG Program and tax incentives to assist with the financial feasibility of such projects. Examples include: Spring Manor, Hearthside, Centre Street Village, Milham Meadows, Gladys Street and Barrington Woods apartments.

Other Goal #3: Support and partner with other community entities to increase awareness of and deter substance abuse for all citizens.

Update:

1. The Human Services Board continues the annual Red Ribbon Week awareness efforts and coordinates a proclamation in partnership with Portage Public Schools each October.
2. The Youth Advisory Committee and staff continues to partner with the Kalamazoo County Substance Abuse Task Force on promoting awareness of the dangers of substance abuse.
3. The Department of Public Safety participates in the “Red Med Box” program providing residents with a safe and secure way to dispose of unwanted medications.

Other Goal #4: Support and facilitate engagement of citizens of all ages in civic activities resulting in high-voting rates, active neighborhood associations and watches and increased volunteerism.

Update:

1. Increased citizen engagement efforts include more frequent publication of the municipal newsletter, the PORTAGER, and launching the PortageAlert mass notification system in 2015 to communicate with citizens regarding emergency and other community events.
2. The city’s Crime Prevention Officer continues to provide assistance to Neighborhood Watch Groups on an ongoing basis.
3. Participation on the Youth Advisory Committee has more than doubled in size from 13 members in 2008 to in excess of 30 in 2015.
4. Voter registration drives are routinely held at each high school.

Workgroup Name: Municipal Services

Goal 1: Encourage economic development and diversity with such things as an aesthetically pleasing, multi-use research park consistent with an active lifestyle. It is important to develop the necessary infrastructure to create jobs, retain population and increase tax base.
--

Update:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The 2014 Comprehensive Plan identifies a large land area south of East Milham Avenue, between Lovers Lane and the Kalamazoo-Battle Creek International Airport as appropriate for a research, development and technology park. The plan contemplates a development that is integrated and planned in a campus-like setting. 2. The 10-year Capital Improvement Plan includes over \$130 million in continued investment in infrastructure, public safety, public facility and parks and bikeways that support further economic development and promote the community as a “Natural Place to Move”. 3. Various economic development efforts over the past 20 years have resulted in a balanced tax base, local employment opportunities, while maintaining a low municipal tax rate. 4. The city has advanced the communication and marketing system to incorporate social media, such as the MI.Portage application for mobile devices, PortageAlert mass notification system, WAZE traffic reporting application for mobile devices and the use of Facebook. |
|---|

Goal 2: Continue to be an active participant in local and regional government leadership and cooperation to deliver better services to our community. Portage will be a leader in fostering intergovernmental cooperation.

Update:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The city continues to engage in intergovernmental efforts such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) Technical and Policy Committees, which plan for regional transportation improvements and secures various state and federal grants for communities in the region. • The Kalamazoo County Transit Authority, which plans for and provides coordinated public transit in the region. • The Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch Authority, which plans for coordinated and enhanced 9-1-1 service. • Kalamazoo LISC Affordable Housing Partnership, which plans for decent, safe and affordable housing within the region. 2. The city coordinates economic development efforts in close partnership with Southwest Michigan First. 3. In 2012, the city entered into an agreement with the City of Kalamazoo for digital parcel data sharing for the purpose of Public Safety dispatching. The data is shared on an annual basis in order to achieve the highest level of accuracy for identifying the location of emergency situations. 4. The city is currently working with the City of Kalamazoo on a high-speed fiber connection that would allow for the sharing of technology resources. Once in place, the first project to be pursued will be the development of reciprocal disaster recovery sites, which will allow for significant cost savings for both agencies as compared to outsourcing to a third-party vendor. 5. Portage continues to participate in the Kalamazoo Area Storm water working group and the Bike Friendly Kalamazoo local efforts to promote more sustainable environmental choices. |
|---|

Other Goals #1 & #2: Convert all existing above ground utilities to underground utilities. Eliminate storm water retention basins and encourage innovative storm water treatments that are environmentally friendly and aesthetically pleasing, such as rain gardens.

Update:

1. The 2014 Comprehensive Plan addresses green development best practices including low impact design, rain gardens, bio-swales and other techniques.
2. All new development requires installation of underground utilities.
3. Planning efforts for city initiated capital improvement project include an evaluation of the feasibility of burying aboveground utilities.
4. Demonstration rain gardens and natural storm water retention systems have been constructed at Liberty Park and the Garden Lane Water treatment Facility.

Other Goal #3: Continuously enhance excellent delivery of police, fire and EMS series as the city grows.

Update:

1. The Department of Public Safety – Police Division continued the accreditation process and received its 5th award in March of 2015. This award is presented to only the most professional and proficient police agencies in the country after a review of all operations, policies etc., by a team of trained police professionals.
2. In order to improve patrol operations and positive officer / citizen contacts, a bicycle unit was formed in the Police Division, whereby officers conduct neighborhood patrols on bicycle and all-terrain vehicles.
3. A new program called Stop, Park and Walk was instituted in the summer of 2015. Patrol officers park their vehicles and make contact with business owners, home owners etc. and track their contacts.
4. The Department of Public Safety – Fire Division completed the necessary analysis and documentation to attain fire accreditation, similar to that of the Police Division.
5. The Fire Division adopted a “quick response” rescue vehicle model, which results in a quicker and more cost-effective response to medical calls for service (approximately 65% of all fire department calls).

Other Goal #4: Promote excellence in image by creating streetscapes and encouraging the development of additional green space around commercial areas and neighborhoods.

Update:

1. The 10-year Capital Improvement Program includes local street enhancements concurrent with local street reconstruction projects. Enhancements will include right-of-way restoration, street trees, drainage and sidewalk improvements.
2. Through the development review process, streetscape landscaping and interior site landscaping are accomplished concurrent with new development and redevelopment projects.

Other Goals #5: Create a friendly walkable downtown area with ample lighting, pathways and benches incorporating landscaping and rain gardens that integrate with the existing commercial/retail district along South Westnedge Avenue.

Update:

1. As noted above, various planning efforts and development tools have been accomplished consistent with creating a pedestrian friendly City Centre Area.
2. Several projects along Westnedge Avenue have installed and extended sidewalk to both sides of the street, including a continuous sidewalk under the I-94 overpass.
3. The 2014 Comprehensive Plan includes a Non-Motorized Transportation Plan and Complete Streets goals to promote pedestrian friendly development and redevelopment. Bus stop shelters and benches have been incorporated into recent projects.

Other Goal #6: Define and communicate an identity that attracts and retains residential, commercial and industrial prospects.

Update:

In 2013, as part of a place making effort, the city was rebranded as a “Natural Place to Move.” This initiative was centered on community strengths such as abundant parks, open space, bikeways and trails, but also as a strong economic driver within the region for both commercial and industrial employers. The rebranding was intended to emphasize the city as one that connects the community to the natural environment, while also inferring that the city is also a natural choice for residents and business due to the many advantages such as great schools, infrastructure, housing transportation options, workforce, etc.

Other Goal #7: Maintain favorable tax rates and user fees.

Update:

Due to a strong and balanced tax base, the city of Portage ranks 6th lowest in its municipal tax rate amongst Michigan cities with a population over 20,000.

Other Goal #8: Encourage and facilitate the development of urban villages or lifestyle centers by developing the appropriate zoning codes and infrastructure.

Update:

As noted above, the city adopted ordinance amendments that provide additional tools for mixed use, more urban development patterns. Included in these tools are Work/Live Accommodations; City Centre Area and Commercial Corridor Mixed Use districts.

Other Goal #9: Maintain and improve municipal services as the city grows and provide capital assets to ensure the highest standard of municipal services.

Update:

1. Reorganization of various municipal departments has contained costs and increased efficiencies in the provision of municipal services in recent years.
2. Investment in new technologies has also increased efficiencies with providing municipal services.
3. The 10-year CIP includes over \$130 million in capital investments to maintain municipal assets including roads, water and sewer infrastructure, parks and trails, and city facilities.

Other Goal #10: Develop as a citywide wireless communication hotspot.

Update:

Wireless Internet service is available at City Hall and the Portage Senior Center and the city is currently researching the construction of a public “Wi-Fi” hotspot at the Celery Flats to enhance this location as a community-gathering place. The city also enjoys a saturation of private-sector wireless options provided by companies such as Verizon, Sprint and AT&T

Workgroup Name: Neighborhoods

Goal 1: Portage neighborhoods are safe at all times.

Update:

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Police officer presence has been improved in neighborhoods due to the Stop, Park, and Walk program, as well as bicycle patrols. 2. Neighborhood Watch programs continue, along with National Night Out and Meet & Eat programs. 3. Public Safety and Community Development regularly partner to provide a coordinated approach to crime prevention and blight prevention. 4. Education and outreach programs by the departments of Public Safety and Community Development concerning neighborhood enhancement efforts are ongoing. 5. K-9 units are in the process of being implemented. |
|--|

Goal 2: Strong economic development while protecting neighborhoods: City planning avoids commercial development at the expense of neighborhoods.

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The 2014 Comprehensive Plan provides future land use guiding principles that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustaining the overall residential character of the city; • Ensuring the transition from one use or grouping of uses is compatible with surrounding uses through screening and buffering; • Accommodating non-residential uses adjacent to and/or mixed with residential uses when such uses support neighborhoods and site design is compatible. Several Zoning Code amendments were adopted that permit low-intensive commercial uses and residential uses in the same building and include: Work/Live accommodations; the City Centre Area Mixed-use district and the Commercial Corridor Mixed-Use floating zone. 2. Several recent Zoning Code amendments have also been adopted to expand business opportunities while protecting residential neighborhoods, which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location and use restrictions related to auto fueling stations. • Location and use restrictions related to auto repair facilities. • Location restrictions related to donation boxes. • Location and use restrictions related to intensive home occupations. |
|---|

Other Goal #1: Strong neighborhoods promote cohesiveness through communication, concern and involvement.

Update:

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Crime Prevention Officer provides ongoing support to Neighborhood Watch Groups and subdivision associations regarding issues of concern. 2. Increased citizen engagement through the PORTAGER newsletter, cable access and PortageAlert has also been a focus of the city. |
|--|

Other Goal #2: Housing stock is renewed and maintained.**Update:**

1. Community Development continues to administer the Neighborhood Support Program, a comprehensive effort to ensure the quality of residential neighborhoods through the elimination of community quality and housing maintenance ordinance concerns.
2. Through the CDBG Program and grants from the State of Michigan, the city expended over \$1 million over the past 8 years to assist with the purchase and/or repair of over 100 homes, helping to provide safe and affordable housing.

Other Goal #3: Cost-effective city services meet neighborhood needs while maintain a low tax rate.**Update:**

1. The city ranks 6th in Michigan for low municipal tax rates.
2. City sponsored leaf pickup, brush pick-up and spring cleanup programs are provided at an established low millage rate to maintain residential neighborhood quality.
3. The city revised its recycling program in October 2015 to a bi-weekly single-stream program, anticipated to enhance the service provision and increase local recycling rates.

Other Goal #4: Neighborhoods have a variety of housing types with low-impact non-residential uses.**Update:**

1. The city Zoning Code offers a range of housing options available for homeowners and renters of all sizes and incomes.
2. The Zoning Code was amended to permit home based businesses and Work/Live accommodations.

Other Goal #5: Condition and availability of entry level housing meets demand.**Update:**

The CDBG Program Consolidated Plan evaluates the needs of low-to-moderate income owners and renters within the community and goals to address such needs.

Other Goal #6: Portage neighborhoods celebrate and contribute to a readily recognized identity.**Update:**

Support for Neighborhood Watch Groups, National Night Out, block parties and other events are provided through the Crime Prevention Office and other city departments.

Other Goal #7: Intra-neighborhood transportation system.**Update:**

1. Local street enhancements projects implemented through annual capital improvement projects focus on sidewalk repairs and construction of sidewalk gaps and connecting trailways where such opportunities exist.
2. The 10-year CIP includes ongoing significant investments in sidewalks, bikeways and multi-use trails. In addition, non-motorized Complete Street concepts will be considered concurrent with private and public development projects.

Workgroup Name: Transportation

Goal 1: A reliable public transportation system for all providing accessibility throughout the region to points of public interest and use.
--

Update:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The 2014 Comprehensive Plan acknowledges the need for public transit in transportation planning efforts, including the provision of sidewalks to bus stops, pads and/or shelters. 2. Capital Improvement transportation and sidewalk projects carefully coordinate improvements to provide accessible public transit stops along roadways with transit routes. 3. The City of Portage opted in to the Central County Transportation Authority, which will provide expanded services within the city and other urbanized areas of the county. |
|---|

Goal 2: Portage citizens have full access to the city on well-maintained pedestrian sidewalks and hike and bike trails, which connect regional trail facilities.

Update:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sidewalk and trail extensions from Oakland Drive to 12th Street along West Milham Avenue have been completed. 2. The 10-year CIP includes significantly increased investments for sidewalks, bikeways and trails, including a new East Central Trailway extending from East Centre Avenue and Portage Road to Lovers Lane and Garden Lane. 3. The 2014 Comprehensive Plan includes Non-Motorized Transportation map and refined guidance on ongoing investments in pedestrian amenities that support the city as a "Natural Place to Move." 4. Adoption of a City of Portage Complete Streets policy that encourages a public street network for all types of users, including motorists and non-motorists was accomplished. |
|---|

Other Goal #1: The Portage Transit Center is an attended facility for awaiting buses and taxis; an hourly express van provides shuttle service to the airport and Kalamazoo Transportation Center; free parking ensures easy access to inter-and intra-city buses, trains and airplanes, facilitating increased usage of public transportation with reduced traffic congestion and auto emissions.

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmentally friendly and user-friendly transportation system. • Parking remains free throughout Portage. |
|---|

Update:

The City of Portage opted in to the Central County Transportation Authority, which will provide expanded services within the city and other urbanized areas of the county.
--

Other Goal #2: Every signalized intersection has state-of-the-art technology for pedestrians to ensure safe mobility in high-traffic areas.
--

Update:

Accessible pedestrian signals are included as an ongoing annual effort in the 10-year CIP. Audible and tactile pedestrian signals are evaluated for each traffic signal upgrade. Current state of the art "countdown" pedestrian signals are installed on each traffic signal upgrade.
--

Other Goal #3: Portage has a walkable civic center that connects entertainment, restaurants and retail venues and is connected to trailways and transportation.

Update:

As noted above, various efforts to encourage pedestrian-friendly development within the City Centre have been underway for the past several years.

Other Goal #4: Portage has a well-maintained street network that provides:

- Smooth flowing traffic;
- Easy-to-read signage including block numbers,
- Safe street design to protect pedestrians and bicycle traffic, and
- Cross-access on South Westnedge Avenue.

Update:

1. City investments into street maintenance equipment and methods have improved street condition ratings for local and major streets.
 - The traffic operations center provides real time traffic monitoring and timing adjustments to improve traffic flow and regression.
 - New signs are installed to meet new federal reflectivity standards.
 - Separate bicycle lanes are constructed based upon bicycle traffic patterns as needed.
2. The 2014 Comprehensive Plan includes a Transportation Chapter addressing the needs of major and local streets, including Complete Street concepts to ensure streets are designed for all uses, including motorized and non-motorized transportation.
3. A Complete Streets policy has been developed to ensure consideration of pedestrian and non-motorized uses concurrent with new development and municipal capital projects.

Other Goal #5: New technologies will be evaluated and adopted as they are shown to be affordable and feasible.

Update:

1. The city has invested significantly into traffic engineering technology to interconnect traffic signals and monitor and manage traffic flow along major thoroughfares throughout the community.
2. Fiber optic traffic interconnection and centralized control of the traffic signal system is ongoing.
3. Radar equipped speed control signs and warning flashers are being implemented as safety measures on major streets.
4. New pavement techniques such as geotextile fabrics, pavement crack control fabrics, and polymer asphalt products have extended the pavement life cycle.