

# PORTAGER

*A Natural Place to Move*



## A Message from Mayor Patricia M. Randall

Hello January 2024 and all that the New Year has to offer!

From a marketing sense, the term “new” always implies something improved upon, better or a must have item. However, the implication is not always true. At least – the older I get – I hope not!

I do think that the New Year allows everyone the opportunity to leave the clutter of the previous year behind and begin with a clean slate. I view the dawn of January 1 as an imaginary line in the sand inviting us to step forward together, sharing the sense of renewal and joy of a fresh start in a new year.

I believe most people wish to exit their life having accomplished something that made the world a better place. Of course, the journey to improve anything, usually begins from within. As we declare our personal resolutions for the new year, let’s keep in mind the impact each of us can have in improving our own community.

Each year we meet as a City Council to adopt specific goals that will guide us throughout the upcoming year. During our recent annual retreat, we established our priorities and plans for coordinating with staff to achieve our objectives. As with most goals – and the speed at which government works – several of our last year’s initiatives will roll forward into this year.

Housing continues to be in short supply across the country and at all housing levels in Portage. Success with most development requires some level of incentives from both local and state programs due to elevated interest rates and the high cost of building materials.

The Lake Center District will continue to see improvements recommended in the Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study to improve safety, mobility, and the quality of life for residents and businesses. An upcoming improvement is a four-way traffic signal to be installed at the intersection of Portage Road and Forest Drive.

Zoning updates to our ordinances will ensure we are implementing current “best practices” and maintaining our longstanding commitment to remain competitive in the market. Recent zoning changes, now allowing Accessory Dwelling Units, incorporate new trends as we address our ongoing housing crisis.

Waste hauling now requires companies who do business in Portage to publicize their rates, to ensure they are fair to all city residents. We continue to examine the benefits of using a single waste hauler which we currently offer with curbside recycling and all other household and natural debris collection programs.

Crossroads Mall is in transition and sitting on sixty acres of prime real estate. We continue to work with the management of this private property to ensure that we

maximize opportunities for future use.

The Farmers Market has soared in popularity and the properties surrounding the Portage Zhang Senior Center will be the future site of our permanent market. The allocation of \$1.75 million from the State of Michigan budget will cover the majority of the cost.

Trail improvements and connections will link Portage and Vicksburg adding three miles of trail. City Council’s continued commitment to maintaining and expanding our network of trails connects us to surrounding communities and encourages destination rides that support our local businesses.

City Council will also be looking at ways we can better support our local businesses, rental community and the relocation of our Department of Public Works Department. We continue to explore options for expanding access to the Gourdneck State Game Area, as well as how best to address electric vehicle transportation.

Your City Council is excited about all the opportunities as we enter the New Year! We renew our commitment to serve you, your family and the community we share. We hope that you will consider getting involved in some way.

As we step forward together, I wish you the best in the coming year!

– Patricia M. Randall

## A Reflection on the Council-Manager Government Model in Portage

Every so often, it is worthwhile to remind ourselves why our city chose the Council Manager form of government in 1963 to ensure an effective and productive system of government in Portage. Your City Manager is a member of the Michigan Municipal Executives (MME), an association affiliated with both the Michigan Municipal League (MML) and the International City Management Association (ICMA).

The manager is appointed by the Mayor and is confirmed by majority vote of the City Council. They serve at the will of the Mayor and City Council, and the elected body is in continuous

productive communication with the manager.

Michigan Municipal Executives ensure the optimal functioning of local government. The decision to hire a professional manager in a community is an investment in effective governance and sustainable development.

Michigan Municipal Executives bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the table, navigating the complex landscape of local governance with skill and dedication. These professionals are equipped to handle the intricacies of municipal administration, from budgetary matters to community engagement initiatives. Their leadership fosters an environment of transparency, accountability, and efficiency within local government structures.

In a Council Manager form of government, elected officials play the most important role. They bridge the gap between residents and government. With their communication skills and commitment to the community, your Mayor and City Council ensure that community voices are not only heard but also actively incorporated into decision-making processes.

The merits of having a Michigan Municipal Executive at the helm of local government with constant and effective oversight by a dedicated elected body cannot be overstated. The elected body’s commitment to community well-being combined with an accountable public manager steer a municipality toward a prosperous and harmonious future.

## City Approves Accessory Dwelling Units to Increase Attainable Housing Options

On December 5, the City Council approved a Zoning Code Ordinance Amendment, specifically addressing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). This amendment aligns with the city’s commitment to the 2022 Attainable Housing Plan and the FY 2023-2024 priorities, emphasizing the improvement of the Zoning Ordinance to remove obstacles to housing affordability.

ADUs, which are commonplace in various Michigan communities, such as Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, Traverse City, Grand Haven, and Holland, are additional living spaces on a property but separated from the primary residence. These units come complete with their own kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom, providing flexibility in housing options.

ADUs serve various purposes, including offering

independent living for aging or disabled family members, generating rental income to offset mortgage costs, and providing affordable housing options for grown children or renters. Their design can be either attached to the primary residence or a detached structure, blending into the neighborhood’s architectural style.

While ADUs offer numerous benefits, they may also introduce challenges. To address these challenges, the city established design standards and restrictions, parking requirements, flexibility in size while limiting placement to the R-1 (A-D) One Family Districts.

The ordinance prohibits the use of ADUs as short-term rentals and addresses potential conflicts with homeowners’ associations.

This is an exciting time for Portage as we take a significant step towards addressing

housing needs and fostering a more diverse and inclusive community. To learn more about ADUs and whether an ADU is a good fit for your property, call the Department of Community Development at 329-4477.

## City Seeking Board & Commission Applicants

Are you interested in serving your fellow citizens and helping your city grow and thrive? If you said yes to all three, then volunteering for the City of Portage is for you! The city is seeking dedicated volunteers to serve on certain advisory boards and commissions. These groups assist the City Council and City Administration by providing the talent and experience needed to solve and make improvements to the community.



Board and commission members are expected to attend monthly meetings, help with events, and present reports when called by City Council. Boards typically meet in the evenings, but some have meetings during the day.

To serve on a board or commission, you must be registered voter in the city. Interested candidates can review information about all the boards and commissions and are invited to apply online at [portagemi.gov/151](http://portagemi.gov/151). The Council will interview candidates on January 23, so apply today!



# Shaping the Future of Portage Together: Three Transformative Open Houses for Inclusive Community Input

Every Portage resident brings a unique perspective on the kind of community they desire for themselves and their families. By incorporating diverse voices and ideas, the city can elevate the quality of planning for the community. Integrating this rich knowledge into local decision-making processes ensures that public choices align with the community’s current conditions and needs, fostering a stronger and balanced living environment. Join us for these three public open houses and help us harness the collective wisdom of our community for the benefit of us all.

## Lakefront Property Housing Codes Open House

- » Tuesday, January 16, 6:30 - 8 PM
- » Lake Center Elementary (10011 Portage Road)

The City of Portage understands the unique physical characteristics of lakefront properties. Providing specific relief to land use challenges for single-family residences in lake neighborhoods is a City Council priority for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

Lakefront residents are invited to visit with city staff, have an open dialogue about lakefront home reinvestment challenges, and learn about the planning process for this study. A postcard with a Lakefront Property Housing Codes Survey link and QR code was mailed to lakefront property owners in late December. The survey will also be available at the open house. Staff will utilize input from the open house and the survey, combined with a review of researched data, to identify and propose solutions and potential changes to city ordinances and/or policies.

There will be ongoing opportunities for public input, ensuring that the community remains actively involved in shaping future home building and remodeling on the lakefront. Stay

informed about additional public input opportunities and receive crucial updates by attending or tuning into Planning Commission and City Council meetings dedicated to this topic.

## Lake Center District Commercial Corridor Rezoning Open House

- » Monday, January 22, 6:30 - 8 PM
- » Lake Center Elementary School (10011 Portage Road)

The city is advancing its efforts to implement the Lake Center District Corridor & Placemaking Plan, which was adopted by the Portage City Council on July 13, 2021. (View the final study at [portagemi.gov/870](http://portagemi.gov/870).) The goal of the study is to promote a revitalized, more walkable, mixed-use area with a focal point being the section of Portage Road nearest the convergence of West Lake and Austin Lake, commonly referred to in the plan as the “Isthmus.”

A proposed rezoning for the Portage Road commercial corridor aims to promote commercial reinvestment, diversify uses and building types, and enhance connectivity with the public space. This will shape the area’s character and improve consistency in the review process. With resident and community input, the goals of the corridor plan can be realized by updating the zoning code.

The Lake Center District Commercial Corridor Rezoning Open House will kick off the rezoning process. The open house will include an overview of general zoning strategies and an opportunity for feedback from those who attend. The rezoning process is expected to continue over the next six months and will have additional opportunities for public input. Stay up to date and learn about additional public input opportunities at [portagemi.gov/873](http://portagemi.gov/873).

## Master Plan Community Input Open House

- » Tuesday, January 30, 5:30 - 8 PM
- » Portage Zhang Senior Centre (203 East Centre Avenue)

The City of Portage is in the process of creating a new Master Plan that will serve as a road map for future land uses and development. The goals of the 18-month Master Plan

update process are to 1) establish where we are today, 2) define where we want to go, and 3) draw the road map to get there. We are now at step three and are ready to draw the road map for the future!

The future land use framework is the primary guide to the future physical development of the City of Portage. The draft city-wide land use map and its designations describe the desired types, intensity, and spatial arrangement of the city’s future land uses to achieve the community vision described in the Master Plan. It also serves as a guide for future decisions about zoning, development, and infrastructure investments. The draft land use map is based on comments received to date during the initial input phases in the first half of 2023 and summed up by the draft land use framework reviewed by the Planning Commission in July of 2023. The draft map applies the concepts contained in the draft framework to specific locations in the city.

All Portage citizens and property owners are invited to the Master Plan Community Input Open House where the draft land use map will be reviewed. Come from 5:30 - 6 PM for open dialogue with city staff and light refreshments. The formal open house will begin at 6 PM with a brief presentation, followed by public input on the draft future land use framework. All are welcome, so please share this opportunity with friends, colleagues, and neighbors.

The process of updating the Master Plan continues after this open house. Stay up to date and learn about future public involvement opportunities by visiting the project website [portagemi.gov](http://portagemi.gov). Track the progress to date, read the completed sections, and continue to share more ideas and comments on the **map.social** public engagement mapping tool. Connect with our communication channels on the “Keep Me Updated” tab of the project website.

As we embark on these transformative open houses to shape the future of Portage together, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to every resident who contributes their unique perspective. Your input is instrumental in elevating the quality of our community planning, ensuring that our public choices resonate with the diverse needs of Portage.

# Six New Combined Industrial Development Districts Proposed

On January 9, 2024, the City Council will convene a public hearing to introduce a transformative proposal: the consolidation of 94 distinct Industrial Development Districts (IDD) into six interconnected regional districts. If you reside in or near these proposed districts, you have likely received a notice about this upcoming public hearing.

## Understanding Industrial Development Districts

Establishing an Industrial Development District marks the initial step towards obtaining an Industrial Facilities Tax Abatement certification for eligible businesses engaged in property improvements. Governed by Public Act 198 of 1974, this initiative has proven instrumental in facilitating up to a 50% tax abatement on capital projects and expansions, thereby generating numerous job opportunities within our city.

## Four Misconceptions about IDD

- » An IDD does not equate to rezoning; your residential status remains unaffected.
- » Your property value for taxation remains unaffected by the district. Market fluctuations are driven by various factors such as inflation, property conditions, neighboring uses, and local supply.
- » The IDD initiative is unrelated to regulatory takings or eminent domain. Residential and commercial properties within an IDD maintain their existing status.
- » Merely residing in an IDD does not grant individuals an Industrial Facilities Tax Abatement. The certification is exclusively available for qualifying businesses engaged in construction, renovation, or expansion, subject to city and state-level approvals.

## Why is City Proposing the Six New IDDs?

Over time, the city has established 94 separate IDDs, each requiring businesses to navigate a complicated approval process. The proposed consolidation aims to expedite the construction process for qualifying applicants, allowing them to concurrently apply for tax abatement certification. This not only reduces community workload but also accelerates economic development.

The City Administration cannot predict specific industrial development requests but anticipates that future projects will predominantly align with the six proposed IDDs. The comprehensive coverage of zoning and land use areas in these districts accommodates a wide array of qualifying business types, as outlined in the City of Portage 2014 Comprehensive Plan.

Learn more about the city’s Industrial Tax Abatement Incentive Policy and existing IDDs at [portagemi.gov/690](http://portagemi.gov/690). City staff knowledgeable about this topic can be reached at 329-4474 or 329-4511.

# Doing Business With the City of Portage

Doing business with the City of Portage has never been more convenient. By registering on bidnet direct, the city’s e-procurement platform, you gain access to a seamless process for reviewing active solicitation opportunities and submitting bids and proposals. Whether you’re at home, in the office, or on the go, bidnet offers the flexibility to engage in the procurement process from any location that suits you.

## Register as a Vendor - It’s FREE!

Visit [portagemi.gov/557](http://portagemi.gov/557) to register on bidnet. This platform allows you to view active solicitation opportunities and submit bids and proposals electronically.

After registering on bidnet, email your name and contact information to [purchasing@portagemi.gov](mailto:purchasing@portagemi.gov). Also, provide details about the products or services you or your company offers. This will help the city add you to their vendor list and send you solicitation invitations that match your offerings.

# Renew Your Dog’s License Online

Did you know that you can renew your dog’s license online? Visit the Kalamazoo County Animal Services and Enforcement (KCASE) portal at [kalcounty.com/ac](http://kalcounty.com/ac) to update your contact information, submit proof of sterilization and updated rabies certificates, upload a photo of your pet, and purchase a license.

As a convenience for Portage dog owners, the City of Portage Treasurer’s Office will continue to issue dog licenses now through March 1, 2024.

- » \$15 for dogs that are spayed/neutered or less than one year old
- » \$45 for dogs not spayed/neutered and more than one year old



# bidnet direct.

powered by **mdf commerce**

The City of Portage has successfully used bidnet since 2021 as our e-procurement solution. bidnet facilitates paperless transactions, saving time and resources for both vendors and the city.

**Cost Savings:** Elimination of paper usage saves money for vendors and the city.

**Time and Fuel Savings:** No need for physical submissions, saving time, fuel, and postage.

**Virtual Participation:** Bids and solicitations can be opened and viewed via video conferencing, allowing virtual attendance from anywhere.

**Transparency:** The platform allows for live viewing of bid openings, ensuring transparency in the process.

**Timely Notifications:** Vendors receive simultaneous notifications of changes or answers to questions via bidnet.

While the procurement process is streamlined through bidnet, the City of Portage recognizes the importance of human interaction. If you have any questions, you can contact the City of Portage Purchasing Manager at 324-9284.

To **renew** a license, present your pre-printed renewal form issued by KCASE (and a current rabies vaccination certificate if it indicates an expiration date on the renewal form). To purchase a **new** license, present the current rabies vaccination certificate and proof of spaying/neutering from your veterinarian. A receipt of vaccination is not valid proof of rabies vaccination; you must present a vaccination certificate.

Payment options at the Treasury window include cash, check (payable to “City of Portage”), and credit/debit card (fees apply).

The Treasury window is open Monday through Thursday from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM and Friday from 8 AM to 12 PM (excluding holidays). If you have questions related to dog licenses, please call KCASE at 383-8775.



# YOUR BACKYARD IS BIGGER THAN YOU THINK

## City Hall Exhibition

*Living the Dream: The Man, the People, and the Park*

Explore the life and influence of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and honor his legacy. Visit City Hall to view the updated exhibition dedicated to his work, learn about the new Portage Park dedicated to Dr. King, and discover ways to make his dream a living reality in your hometown.

- » Now through January 31, normal business hours
- » Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue)
- » FREE

## Stewardship Day

Learn how to be a steward of the land. Join the Michigan Department of Natural Resources & Michigan United Conservation Clubs at the Gourdneck State Game Area to help remove woody invasives like glossy buckthorn to make room for native plants to grow. Lunch will be provided. Bring your work gloves and enthusiasm and be ready to work outside for a minimum of three hours. Closed-toed, waterproof footwear is recommended. Supplies for invasive species removal will be provided.



- » Saturday, January 13, 9 AM - 12 PM
- » Gourdneck State Game Area (Angling Road, 2nd Parking Lot)
- » FREE with lunch provided (Registration required)



Transform your idea into reality by participating in business development programs and services with Portage IdeaWorx. Classes focus on food, arts, and science ideas to help you turn your dream into a new business venture. IdeaWorx offers programs in collaboration with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Western Michigan University. Register today to start a new path; class sizes are limited. Do you want to learn more about selling foods made in your own home kitchen? Discover what it takes to become a Cottage Food Law vendor by attending this workshop. Learn about Michigan Cottage Food Law licensing requirements and guidelines for preparing and selling cottage foods.

- » Wednesday, January 17, 6 - 8:30 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$40 per participant (Registration required)

# YOU HAVE MORE FRIENDS THAN YOU KNOW

## Pickleball Trio – NEW!

*Instructed by Garrett McLaughlin, Athletic Trainer and Performance Coach*

Call 329-4555 to register for one or all three classes.

### Pickleball Injury Prevention

Join us for an injury prevention class tailored specifically for adult pickleball players. This event is designed to help you stay on the court and enjoy your favorite sport without the fear of injury.

- » Wednesday, January 10, 2 - 4 PM
- » FREE (Registration required)

### Pickleball Injury Recovery

Are injuries keeping you off the pickleball court or limiting your enjoyment for the game? Join our injury recovery seminar to regain your playing form pain-free. We'll address some of the most common pickleball injuries, particularly at the ankles, knees, spine, and shoulders, offering expert insights on how to resolve these conditions effectively.

- » Wednesday, January 24, 2 - 4 PM
- » FREE (Registration required)

## Portage Parks & Recreation Events, Camps & Classes

1,000 Acres. 20 Parks. One City.

To find out more and register online, visit [mypark.portagemi.gov](http://mypark.portagemi.gov) and click the REGISTER NOW! button.

REGISTER NOW!

## John Ball Zoo Meet & Greet Animal Station

Meet and greet ambassador animals from John Ball Zoo. Learn about animals, their young, and how different animals grow up. Enjoy an up-close encounter with live zoo animals. Space is limited. Arrive by 9:45 AM to be seated for this program. Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a chaperone. Registration is required for all participants, including chaperones, by January 12.

- » Saturday, January 20, 10 - 10:45 AM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$5 per participant, per session

## Adopt-A-Critter

A unique gift idea that supports wildlife found in Portage parks. Adopt a critter – Squirrel, Fox, Muskrat, Owl, or Rabbit – by visiting the Portage Parks & Recreation “Adopt-A-Critter Corner.” The adoption package is \$35 and includes a plush critter, an adoption certificate, a carrying case, and a trading card. These cute critters make the perfect gift for your loved ones. Proceeds support nature programs and help make Portage *A Natural Place to Move!* For more information, call Portage Parks & Recreation at 329-4522.



- » January 22 - February 15
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$35 each

## YAC Winter Snow Party

Join the Portage Youth Advisory Committee for wintertime fun! Bring your own decorated cardboard sled to see if it's the fastest on the hill. Build and dress up the fanciest snowman. Prizes will be awarded for both contests, as well as for the fastest sled. The cardboard sled contest will begin at 1 PM, with snowman judging following immediately after. Hot cocoa, tea, and snacks will be available.

- » Saturday, February 3, 12 – 2 PM
- » Oakland Drive Park (7650 Oakland Drive)
- » FREE (no registration required)

## Black History Month Presentation

In celebration of Black History Month, the City of Portage will host a special speaker Dr. Sian Proctor at the Air Zoo. Dr. Sian Proctor is a geoscientist, space artist, and astronaut. She was the mission pilot for SpaceX Inspiration4, the first all-civilian orbital mission. She is the first African American woman to

pilot a spacecraft, the first African American commercial astronaut, and the first African American to paint in space. She is the CEO of Space2inspire and founder of the nonprofit Proctor Foundation for Art and Science. Explore the Air Zoo's exhibitions before and after the presentation. A question-and-answer session and book signing will take place after the presentation. Books may be purchased on-site while supplies last (cash only).



- » Saturday, February 3, 6 PM
- » Air Zoo (6151 Portage Road)
- » FREE (No registration required)

## Yoga 4 Life

Start your new year's resolution with Yoga! Relax, refocus, and improve your strength and flexibility with yoga to improve your life. Join personal fitness trainer, Josie Moorlag, for this monthly four-week yoga class open to adults 18 and over with all levels of experience. Students must provide their own yoga mat and are encouraged to wear comfortable exercise clothing. Maximum of 20 participants per session.

- » Tuesdays, February 6 - 27, 7 - 8 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$59 per participant, per session (Registration required)

## Winter Blast Half Marathon, 10K, 5K

The 12th Annual Winter Blast Half Marathon, 10K, 5K, organized by Kalamazoo Area Runners and the City of Portage in a community celebration of health and wellness, will be held on Sunday, February 25. The courses highlight the Portage trail system and include a mix of paved bike trails and roads. All running events start and end at Loy Norrix High School, 606 East Kilgore Road, where parking is available. The half marathon begins at 8 AM, the 5K at 8:10 AM, followed by the 10K at 8:20 AM. Post-race refreshments, entertainment, and awards will be presented in the Loy Norrix Gymnasium Atrium. Registration for the Half Marathon will close once it reaches a cap of 1,500 participants. For more information or to register or volunteer for this event, please visit [runsignup.com/Race/MI/Kalamazoo/WinterBlastHalfMarathon10K5K](http://runsignup.com/Race/MI/Kalamazoo/WinterBlastHalfMarathon10K5K).



- » Sunday, February 25, 8 AM
- » Loy Norrix High School (606 East Kilgore Road)
- » Registration required

## Portage Zhang Senior Center Events, Activities & Classes

Explore More. Have Fun. Live Well.

Find us at 203 East Centre Avenue | [mypzsc.portagemi.gov](http://mypzsc.portagemi.gov) | Questions? Call 329-4555.

Experience a vital, vibrant community offering a wide variety of services and activities that match the needs of active older adults. Membership at the PZSC is open to anyone over the age of 50. Portage residency is not required. All events are held at the Portage Zhang Senior Center unless otherwise noted.

### Pickleball for Wellness

Discover the path to optimal health and wellness with our “Pickleball for Wellness” class, thoughtfully designed for adult pickleball players. In this class, you'll learn the range of health benefits that the game of pickleball provides. Pickleball is an excellent way to improve cardiovascular fitness, bone strength, balance, and coordination, making it an ideal choice for overall wellness.

- » Wednesday, February 7, 2 - 4 PM
- » FREE (Registration required)

### Chili Cook-Off

Join us at the Portage Zhang Senior Center for the inaugural Chili Cook-Off! Up to 15 community organizations/members will vie for the title of “Best Chili.” Sample each chili and cast votes for your three favorites. Don't miss out on what is sure to be a fun and filling event! If you or your organization would like to enter the contest, or if you would like to participate as a taster, register by calling 329-4555.

- » Thursday, January 18, 1 - 3 PM
- » \$5 Tasting Fee (Registration required)

## American Red Cross Blood Drive

Absolute Homecare and Medical Staffing is partnering with the PZSC to offer an American Red Cross Blood Drive. Register for an appointment by calling 353-6180 or schedule online at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org). When registering, specify the “Portage Zhang Senior Center” as your location. Walk-in's are welcome.

- » Friday, January 19, 12 - 5:45 PM

## Black History Trivia Bingo

*Presented by: Society for History and Racial Equity*

Join us at the PZSC to enrich and expand your knowledge of our community's rich African American heritage with an educational program that mixes local history with the fun of Bingo! Kick-off Black History Month with Chianti' Lymon, Executive Director of Society for History and Racial Equity (S.H.A.R.E.), for an evening of playful learning based on oral interviews conducted over the last 20 years that highlight the resonant accomplishments of people from this community. Registered guests will enjoy refreshments and pizza. Register at 329-4555.

- » Wednesday, January 31, 4 – 6 PM
- » FREE and open to the public (Registration required)





# PORTAGER

## Election News From the City Clerk

As we navigate the evolving landscape of elections in Michigan, the Office of the City Clerk brings you important information about crucial election adjustments. From a revised primary election date to the introduction of additional ballot drop box locations and important insights into new early voting rules, we are committed to facilitating a seamless and accessible electoral process. Read on for essential information that will empower you to actively participate in local, state, and national elections.

### Michigan’s Presidential Primary Election Moving in 2024

With the passage of Public Act 2 of 2023, Michigan Election Law was amended by the State Legislature to move Michigan’s Presidential Primary Election to the fourth Tuesday in February each presidential election year going forward. The 2024 Presidential Primary Election will be held on **Tuesday, February 27, 2024**. Michigan now joins Nevada and South Carolina in holding primaries in the second month of the 2024 presidential election year. All 19 precincts in the City of Portage will be open on Election Day from 7 AM to 8 PM. To find out where you vote in-person on Election Day, visit the Michigan Voter Information Center at [mi.gov/vote](https://www.mi.gov/vote).

### Presidential Primary Election Ballot Type Selection

Whether you plan to vote absentee, vote early, or vote in person at your precinct on Election Day, the law requires that voters select a specific ballot type for the Presidential Primary Election: Democrat or Republican. There is NO non-partisan style ballot for 2024. Neither the State of Michigan nor the City of Portage track party registration but, due to the semi-closed nature of the Presidential Primary, ballots are party-specific. Voters on the Permanent Absentee Application List AND the Permanent Absentee Ballot List will

receive a form in the mail to select their preferred ballot type for the Primary. Absentee Voters can also complete their application and ballot type online at [mi.gov/vote](https://www.mi.gov/vote).

### New Ballot Drop Boxes and Locations

The Portage City Clerk’s Office will be introducing measures to meet the new requirements of Proposal 22-2 including the installation of additional Official Absentee Voter Drop Boxes around the city. Two new drop boxes in addition to the three secure drop boxes located at Portage City Hall, have been installed.

#### Official Absentee Voter Drop Box Locations:

- » Portage Fire Station No. 2 (6101 Oakland Drive)
  - Near the red emergency phone
- » Portage Fire Station No. 3 (8503 South Sprinkle Road)
  - Near the red emergency phone
- » Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue)
  - Just outside the front door
  - East side of the parking lot
  - 24-hour Treasury drop box



All locations are on or near a Metro bus line. The drop boxes are available 24/7 and are monitored by video camera, in accordance with Michigan Election Law.

### Early Voting coming to Kalamazoo County

Following the passage of Proposal 22-2 in November 2022, Michigan is now one of 21 states to offer in-person early voting for state and federal elections. Early voting will be implemented statewide for the Presidential Primary in 2024. Early voting is different than in-person absentee voting in that voters can enter their ballot into a tabulator rather than it being held until Election Day. Results are not generated until the polls close on Election Day.

Over the past year, city and township clerks across Kalamazoo County have worked with the County Clerk to

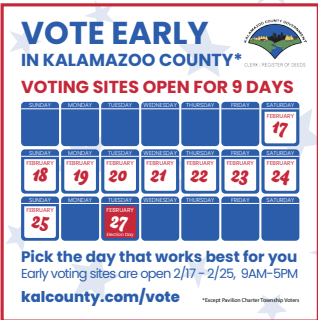
create a collaborative Early Voting Agreement, which the Portage City Council unanimously supported in October 2023. Voters will have nine consecutive days of early voting, beginning two Saturdays before Election Day and ending the Sunday before Election Day.

Four early voting sites have been selected throughout Kalamazoo County, all of which can accommodate voters from any participating jurisdiction, including Portage. Each site will be open from 9 AM to 5 PM for the nine days of early voting.

- » Fetzner Center @ WMU: 2251 Business Court, Kalamazoo
- » Douglass Community Center: 1000 West Paterson Street, Kalamazoo
- » Kalamazoo County Expo Center: 2900 Lake Street, Kalamazoo
- » Portage Parks & Recreation: 320 Library Lane, Portage

Early voting is only available during state and federal elections. In 2024, Early Voting Centers will be open for the Presidential Primary in February (February 17 to 25), the State Primary in August, and the General Election in November. Early voting will not be available for local or special elections. As always, voters still have the option to vote at their local precinct on Election Day or via absentee ballot.

For more information about Early Voting in Michigan, please visit [mi.gov/vote](https://www.mi.gov/vote) and navigate to the Early Voting page. For more information about the Presidential Primary election or official absentee voter ballot drop box locations, visit the Elections & Voting Frequently Asked Questions at [portagemi.gov/163](https://www.portagemi.gov/163). For all other election questions, please call the Office of the City Clerk at 329-4511.



7900 South Westnedge Avenue  
Portage, Michigan 49002-5160  
[portagemi.gov](https://www.portagemi.gov) | (269) 329-4400

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POSTAL CUSTOMER

Portage City Hall and all other non-emergency city offices will be closed on the following dates:

**Martin Luther King Jr. Day**  
» Monday, January 15

*In the event of a police, fire or medical emergency, please dial 9-1-1.*

## Portage City Council

Portage City Council meetings are held twice a month on Tuesdays at 7 PM at Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue) in Council Chambers and are always open to the public.

## The City Manager

The City Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city. Citizens are encouraged to contact the City Manager with concerns or complaints about city services by visiting [reportit.portagemi.gov](https://www.reportit.portagemi.gov) or by calling Complaint Resolution at 329-4404.

## Televised City Meetings

City Council, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings can be viewed live on Spectrum channel 995 and AT&T channel 99. All meetings can be viewed via live streaming at [portagemi.gov/205](https://www.portagemi.gov/205).

### JANUARY 2024

4	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting
8	7:00 PM	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
9	7:00 PM	City Council Meeting
18	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting
23	7:00 PM	City Council Meeting

## The Portager

The *Portager* is the official publication of the City of Portage, used to inform residents of city services and events, as well as city projects that have significance to Portage citizens. The newsletter is published monthly and delivered to every mailbox in the 49002 and 49024 zip codes.

This month’s front and back cover photo features the Grain Elevator at the Celery Flats Historical Area.

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