

PORTAGER

A Natural Place to Move



A Message from Mayor Patricia M. Randall

When things run smoothly, especially in my home, not a thought is given to the symphony of order and predictability requiring nothing of my time or focus. It can be a gift to know someone else is at the helm. The same holds true for a city. It's hard to appreciate that all is working well until something unexpected occurs, breaks, bursts, floods, etc. Our Department of Public Works is always doing their job, so you don't have to even think about it.

The Portage Department of Public Works oversees the maintenance of all major and local streets, parks, trails, bikeways, sidewalks, signs, cemeteries, city buildings, an entire city fleet, and resident services. This includes all curbside programs: Recycling and leaf/brush collection as well as our spring bulk cleanup.

Numbering 42 employees, Public Works is funded differently than any other city department. The department expenditures represents approximately 7% (\$2.5 million) of our General Fund budget which funds the maintenance of parks, cemeteries, and buildings. State road funding provides 54% (\$5.4 million) of Public Works expenses for major and local streets maintenance. Citizen-approved millages provide an additional \$2.1 million for the remaining services, for a total of \$10 million.

The Portage Public Works Department has three divisions:

1. The Parks Division maintains our 20 parks which total 864 acres, 4 cemeteries, and 25 miles of paved bike trails. This division also tends to trees in public spaces as it has managed our Tree City USA designation for the past three decades. These employees also continue to support our events.

2. Street Maintenance manages 244 miles of our major and local road system as well as 166 miles of sidewalks. Department personnel have worked tirelessly to clean up from the tornado and straight line windstorm. The two storms created the equivalent of six years' worth of brush, so cleanup continues. Despite this unexpected workload, staff continues to perform the Mill and Fill Program, apply chip seal, fill potholes and repair curbs and gutters. When the snow begins to fly again, this crew will then pivot to removing snow and spreading salt to ensure our safety.

3. Fleet and Facilities manages the procurement, maintenance and disposal of the city's fleet (excluding police and fire vehicles), while continuing to maintain all city owned properties. They work diligently on integrating new technologies that include alternative fuels for vehicles, as well as energy conservation, solar installation and electric vehicle charging stations at city owned facilities.

Combined, Public Works provides many of the city's most recognized public services in addition to providing and

maintaining the public infrastructure Portage families depend upon. That's a tall order with high expectations and, thanks to Mother Nature, a never-ending challenge!

As you would expect, the employees of this department have an abundance of talent, licensing, and certifications from building to HVAC, from commercial driver licenses to Pesticide Application, and many more. When competing project bids came in that exceeded our budgeted allotment, we tapped into the talent within this department. Thanks to them we have beautiful pavilions, new cement work, year-round public rest rooms and a remodeled kitchen. It was a win-win as the city saved thousands of dollars and the variety of work made a day on the job that much more rewarding for our Public Works team.

We have outgrown our current location on South Westnedge Avenue so the entire department will move to a new site a mile down the road on Portage Industrial Drive in 2026. In the meantime, expect your streets and drains to be significantly cleaner thanks to the recent purchase of two new street cleaners. Once the deluge of rain subsides, the mowing and weeding will resume.

As we welcome autumn and life continues to speed by, I hope you give a thought to the day-to-day challenges facing our amazing team within the Department of Public Works as they work to take care of everything.

- Patricia M. Randall

City Begins Annual Capital Improvement Program Planning

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is the city's multi-year planning instrument used to identify needs and financing sources for public infrastructure improvements. The purpose of the CIP is to facilitate the orderly forecasting of infrastructure improvements; maintain, preserve, and protect the city's existing infrastructure system; provide for the purchase or scheduled replacement of equipment; and allocate funding sources.

The CIP is intended to reflect a consensus of community needs based on surveys and planning initiatives, the adopted goals and objectives of the City Council, and the previous CIP budget and plan, and to consider new information to meet the ever-changing needs and priorities of our community.

The CIP is a key financing and implementation tool for City of Portage planning efforts, such as:

- » The Comprehensive Plan, which addresses long-term goals and needs regarding land use, the transportation network, recreation, and open space, natural/cultural resources, economy and marketplace, utility infrastructure, and community facilities
- » Strategic plans and studies such as the Lake Center District Corridor and Placemaking Study, 2015 Wellhead Protection Plan, 2019 Water Reliability Study, Storm Water Design Criteria Manual, and 2023 Crossroads Area Transition Plan
- » Periodic municipal facility audits, annual reports (e.g. utility operation and maintenance reports, annual traffic count and signal studies), and citizen surveys; among others

Every September the City of Portage begins the annual process to update the CIP. Preparation of the CIP is performed under the authority of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008). Examples of eligible public infrastructure improvements include:

- » Public streets, non-motorized transportation (sidewalk, bike lanes, and multi-use trails)
- » Municipal water, sanitary sewer, and storm drainage facilities
- » Parks and other public recreation and cultural opportunities
- » Public facilities such as City Hall, Portage Zhang Senior Center, Public Works, Public Safety, and Parks & Recreation
- » Technology investments, city equipment, and vehicles

Speak Up and Make Your Voice Heard!

Public participation from Portage residents, business owners, and interested stakeholders helps ensure that decisions made on capital investments address the needs and aspirations of the community. The city is seeking input from Portage residents, business owners, and interested stakeholders to submit ideas for capital improvement projects and provide feedback on projects already in the planning stages.

Please visit portagemi.gov/665 to complete the 2025-2031 CIP Survey. The current 2024-2030 Six-Year Capital Improvement Program can be viewed online by following the same link. Questions concerning the CIP can be directed to the Office of the City Manager at 329-4404.

Capital Improvement Program Timeline & Approvals

The schedule below outlines the process and timeline related to the development and approval of the annual six-year Capital Improvement Program.

September: An online survey is open to the public.

October - November: City departments develop and submit CIP project proposals.

November: Survey results are studied and prioritized.

November - January: City Administration reviews and prioritizes proposed CIP projects.

First Regular Council Meeting in April: The City Manager formally provides the final proposed CIP to the City Council for review. The Planning Commission will also be presented with a copy.

April - May: City Council reviews the CIP and conducts budget review sessions.

Second City Council Meeting in May: City Council approves the first fiscal year budget included in the six-year CIP (Fiscal Year 2025-2026) and the annual operating budget.



Planning Commission Adopts Master Plan

On August 15, 2024, the Portage Planning Commission adopted the Portage Forward Together 2024 Master Plan. Over the past two years, the city worked to assess existing conditions, host public meetings, and gather input from businesses, developers, and the community, resulting in more than 800 engagement points. The new Master Plan, presented in an interactive online format that meets state requirements, replaces the 2014 Master Plan.

The updated plan addresses the city's current and future needs, focusing on quality of life, land use, economic development, and sustainability. It includes 12 sections covering themes like Vision and Goals, Land Use and Development, and Environmental Sustainability.

Key community feedback was incorporated, balancing housing demand with natural area preservation and promoting energy sustainability.

The plan also details the future of three subareas: the Crossroads Mall Area, the City Centre, and the Lake Center District, emphasizing mixed-use development to enhance housing and business opportunities. Each section culminates in an implementation list to guide the city's future actions.

With the new Master Plan in place, the city will prioritize actions to align with its vision, including updating zoning codes and development standards to support more housing opportunities, continuing to involve the community throughout the process.

Scan the QR Code to view the Portage Forward Together 2024 Master Plan



Portage Voter Update

Key Information for the Upcoming 2024 General Election

As the 2024 General Election approaches, it's crucial for Portage residents to stay informed about important dates, voter registration, and absentee voting options. Here's a comprehensive guide to help you navigate the upcoming election season.

National Voter Registration Day: September 17, 2024

On September 17, 2024, the City of Portage will join thousands of partners nationwide to celebrate National Voter Registration Day. This annual nonpartisan event is dedicated to raising awareness about voter registration resources and opportunities. If you haven't registered to vote yet, this is the perfect opportunity to do so. Michigan residents can conveniently register online by visiting the Michigan



As many as 1 in 4 eligible Americans are not registered to vote or don't know if they are registered. Get **#VoteReady** on **#NationalVoterRegistrationDay**.

Voter Information Center at mi.gov/vote. Let's make sure every eligible voter is **#VoteReady** and participates in the democratic process this November.

Absentee Voting: Plan Ahead!

For residents planning to be away from Portage during the winter months or college students living out of town, absentee voting is a convenient way to ensure your voice is heard. Recent changes to Michigan's absentee voting process might affect how you cast your ballot.

If you need your absentee ballot sent to a location other than your registered address, such as a second home or dorm room, be sure to indicate this on your absentee ballot application. While absentee ballot applications can be forwarded by the Post Office, ballots themselves cannot. You can apply for an absentee ballot online at mi.gov/vote, where you can also specify an alternate mailing address. Remember to provide the dates you'll be at that address, as

well as your email and phone number, to ensure the Clerk's Office can reach you if any issues arise.

Key Dates Leading Up to the November 5 General Election

- » **End of September:** Absentee ballots will be mailed to voters.
- » **October 21:** Last day to register to vote online or by mail.
- » **October 22 - November 5:** Register to vote in person at the City Clerk's Office.
- » **October 26:** Early voting begins in Kalamazoo County, with hours from 9 AM to 5 PM, at four locations throughout the county.
- » **November 3:** Early voting ends.
- » **November 5:** Election Day! Polls will be open from 7 AM to 8 PM. Make sure to return your absentee ballot to the Office of the City Clerk or an Absentee Ballot Drop Box before 8 PM.

By staying informed and planning ahead, you can ensure that your vote counts in this important election. Whether you're registering for the first time, voting absentee, or heading to the polls on Election Day, every vote contributes to shaping the future of our community and country.

Property Maintenance Reminder

Be a Responsible Property Steward!

As the fall season brings quick, intense rainstorms, it is crucial to keep our streets free from water ponding, which often occurs when drainage grates become clogged. It's easy to overlook the buildup of lawn clippings, leaves, and other debris in street gutters and on drainage grates, but doing so can lead to significant issues.



The Portage Department of Transportation & Utilities encourages all residents to take an active role in maintaining the cleanliness of street gutters and storm drainage grates adjacent to their properties. Follow these simple yet essential guidelines to help keep our community safe and clean.

» **Keep Debris Out of the Streets:** Avoid blowing grass clippings, leaves, or any other debris into the street. When it rains, stormwater carries these materials down

the gutter, potentially clogging the nearest drainage grate.

- » **Regularly Inspect and Clean Grates:** Take a few moments to inspect the drainage grates near your property and remove any accumulated debris. For major maintenance concerns, please contact the Department of Transportation & Utilities at 329-4422.
- » **Dispose of Waste Properly:** Never pour used motor oil, chemicals, or other hazardous substances into drainage grates or street gutters. These can cause serious environmental damage and block the drainage system. The Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Center accepts used motor oil and other household chemicals free of charge for Portage residents. Visit the HHW Center website at kalcounty.com/hhw to learn more and view their hours of operation.
- » **Avoid Using Grates as Trash Receptacles:** Do not treat street drainage basins as garbage collectors or dumpsters, especially for pet waste. Proper disposal of waste is essential to maintaining a clean and efficient drainage system.

By taking these simple preventative measures, you'll help ensure that storm sewers function at their best, minimize water pooling on streets near your property, and keep your neighborhood looking its best. Your efforts as a responsible property steward are vital to maintaining the beauty and safety of our community.

CLEAN SWEEP PROGRAM

Protecting our groundwater. Available to any Michigan homeowner, farm, nursery, greenhouse, or golf course owner.



For more information visit our website: kalcounty.com/hhw or call 269-373-5211.



The Michigan **Clean Sweep Program** helps protect the state's natural resources and prevent agriculture pollution by ensuring the safe and proper disposal of outdated, unused, or unwanted pesticides. As a participating Clean Sweep site, the Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Center will accept pesticide product, free of charge, from any Michigan resident. The HHW Center is located at 1301 Lamont Avenue in Kalamazoo. Visit their website for hours of operation.

Curbside Brush Collection Starts September 30

The City of Portage offers a convenient brush collection program during January, May, July, and October. The city is divided into four zones, with each neighborhood zone receiving one scheduled collection.

For the 2024 October collection, services will begin the week of September 30 in Zone 1. Residents should place their brush curbside by 7 AM on the designated Monday of their zone's collection week.

Zone	Collection Begins the Week of:
Zone 1 (Northwest Quadrant)	September 30
Zone 2 (Southwest Quadrant)	October 7
Zone 3 (Southeast Quadrant)	October 14
Zone 4 (Northeast Quadrant)	October 21

Please ensure branches are between 4 and 6 feet long and less than 3 inches in diameter. Each street will be serviced once, and crews cannot return for late placements.

For complete program details, visit portagemi.gov/280. Please contact the Department of Public Works at 329-4444 with any questions.

The Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection Program is not performed for commercial establishments, churches or schools, or on private streets (unless every property owner on a private street has signed an indemnification form).

Brush Drop Off Day - Saturday, October 26

The Oakland Drive Compost Facility will be open for residents to drop off loose brush on Saturday, October 26 from 9 AM to 1 PM. The compost facility is located at 10905 Oakland Drive, just south of West Osterhout Avenue. Staff from the Department of Public Works will be on site to assist residents.



Fall Leaf Pickup Program Kicks Off October 28

City Adds New Zone for Improved Service

The Fall Leaf Pickup Program includes the collection of leaves along public streets and will run from October 28 through December 6. To better accommodate leaf volumes, the city has modified the zone map to include eight zones instead of the previous seven zones.

Leaf collection will occur three times in each zone or until prohibited by weather. The schedule and map below indicate the pickup dates for the eight leaf pickup zones. Collection dates and a handy address locator tool are also available at portagemi.gov/282.

This program is not performed for commercial establishments, churches or schools, or on private streets (unless every property owner on a private street has signed an indemnification form).

- Place leaves at the curb by 7 AM on your scheduled pickup date.
- ONLY loose leaves or leaves bagged in biodegradable paper bags will be collected. Leaves in plastic bags (including biodegradable plastic bags) WILL NOT be collected.**
- Loose leaves should be raked off the grass and into the street. Leaves bagged in biodegradable paper yard waste bags should be placed next to the curb as close to the street edge as possible. **Please do not block traffic or bike lanes.**
- The Fall Leaf Pickup Program is separate from the Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection Program (see previous page for brush collection details).
- Public streets will be swept following the third and final collection, weather permitting.
- There is NO burn period in Portage.** Burning of leaves is not permitted at any time.

Zone	1st Collection	2nd Collection	3rd Collection
1	Monday, October 28	Monday, November 11	Monday, November 25
2	Tuesday, October 29	Tuesday, November 12	Tuesday, November 26
3	Wednesday, October 30	Wednesday, November 13	Wednesday, November 27
4	Thursday, October 31	Thursday, November 14	Monday, December 2
5	Friday, November 1	Friday, November 15	Tuesday, December 3
6	Monday, November 4	Monday, November 18	Wednesday, December 4
7	Tuesday, November 5	Tuesday, November 19	Thursday, December 5
8	Wednesday, November 6	Wednesday November 20	Friday, December 6

Objects Placed in the City Right-of-Way Impede Safe Collection Operations

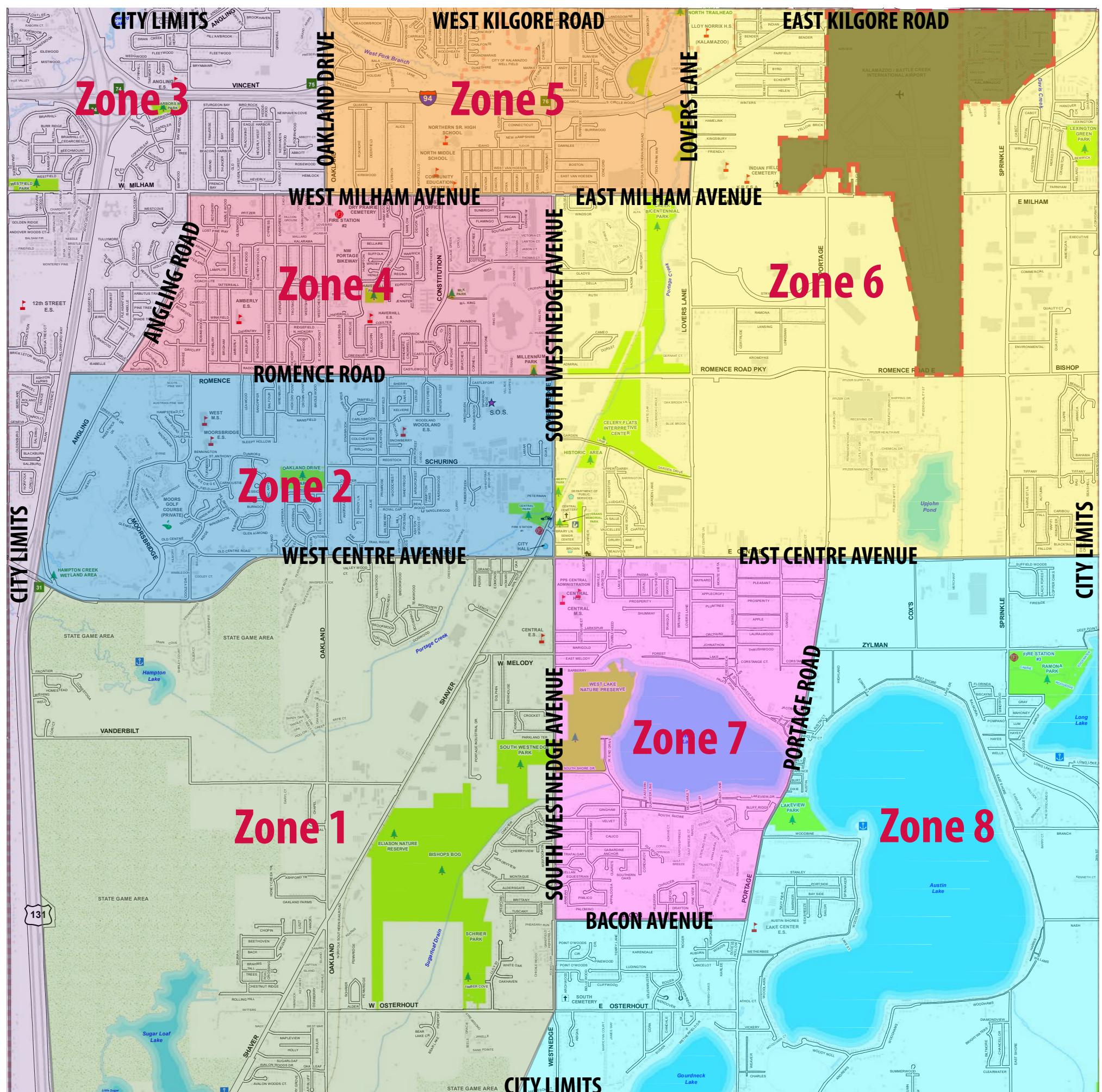
Objects like portable basketball stands, rubbish containers, and other objects placed in the city right-of-way impede collection operations such as leaves in the fall, brush throughout the year, household rubbish in the spring, street sweeping, and snow plowing in the winter.

The Portage Code of Ordinances (Chapter 66, Article 1, Section 66-2) prohibits residents from placing objects in the city right-of-way. The city right-of-way is defined as the area between the curb and sidewalk or, for those without sidewalks, the area 33 feet from the center of the roadway.

Items left in the city right-of-way can result in damage to personal property and city equipment. Residents are asked to remove all objects from the city right-of-way so Public Works employees can provide collection services without damaging their possessions or city equipment.

A safe distance to permanently position items (a portable basketball stand for example) on private property is 33 feet or more from the center of the roadway. Likewise, during trash and recycling removal days, citizens are asked to keep containers on the curb versus on the actual roadway. At no time should bike lanes or sidewalks be obstructed by leaves, brush, or trash/recycling carts.

Your cooperation in helping the city safely perform collection efforts is appreciated. For additional information, please contact the Department of Public Works at 329-4444.



Fire Prevention Week

Ensure Your Smoke Alarms are Working

As Fire Prevention Week approaches, October 6-12, 2024, the City of Portage Department of Public Safety – Fire Division is reminding the community to ensure their smoke alarms are working effectively. This year's theme, "Smoke Alarms: Make Them Work for You!™," underscores the crucial role that functioning smoke alarms play in home safety.

In collaboration with the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA), the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week™ (FPW) for more than 100 years, the Portage Department of Public Safety is dedicated to educating the community about smoke alarm safety. According to NFPA, smoke alarms can reduce the risk of dying in a home fire by more than 50%. However, approximately three out of five fire deaths occur in homes with either no smoke alarms or non-working alarms.

"Smoke alarms are the first line of defense in a home fire, but they must be operational to be effective," said Lorraine Carli, NFPA Vice President of Outreach and Advocacy. "This year's Fire Prevention Week campaign aims to educate the public on the simple yet vital steps to ensure smoke alarms are

installed and functioning correctly."

Portage Deputy Fire Marshal William Graham emphasized, "Working smoke alarms are crucial for ensuring safety during a fire, as they provide essential time to escape. Fire Prevention Week offers a valuable opportunity to highlight Community Risk Reduction and promote proactive safety measures. I encourage everyone to join us at the F.I.R.E. Open House on Saturday, October 5. This event will provide important information on smoke alarms and community safety, and it's a great opportunity to connect with your local first responders."

Department of Public Safety Smoke Alarm Safety Tips:

- » Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area (such as a hallway), and on every level of the home, including the basement.
- » Ensure smoke alarms meet the needs of all family members, including those with sensory or physical disabilities.
- » Test smoke alarms monthly by pressing the test button.
- » Replace all smoke alarms that are ten years old or older.

For more information about Fire Prevention Week and smoke alarms, visit fpw.org.

Portage Department of Public Safety F.I.R.E. Open House

Saturday, October 5

9 AM to 12 PM

Fire Station No. 1 - 7830 Shaver Road

- » Live Interactive Safety Demonstrations
- » Educational Booths & Risk Reduction Workshops
- » Junior Firefighter Obstacle Course
- » Hands On Fire Extinguisher Training
- » Sparky the Fire Dog
- » Fire Truck Tours



Back-to-School Safety

As summer winds down and the back-to-school season gets underway, it's essential to focus on safety. Whether your child walks, bikes, rides the bus, or is driven to school, following these safety tips can help ensure a smooth and secure start to the new school year.



Walkers

- » **Buddy Up:** Encourage your child to walk to and from school with a friend.
- » **Stranger Safety:** Teach your child about stranger danger and establish a secret safety word only you and your child know, in case someone else needs to pick them up.
- » **Sidewalk Safety:** Always walk on the sidewalk. If there's no sidewalk, walk facing oncoming traffic.
- » **Street Crossing:** Look left, right, and left again before crossing the street. Make eye contact with drivers to ensure they see you.
- » **Use Crosswalks:** Always cross at crosswalks or intersections.

Bike Riders

- » **Ride Right:** Always ride on the right side of the road, following traffic.
- » **Stop and Walk:** Come to a complete stop before crossing any street, and walk your bike across.
- » **Stay Alert:** Pay attention to your surroundings at all times.
- » **Safety Gear:** Wear a properly fitted helmet and bright, reflective clothing to stay visible.

Bus Riders

- » **Bus Stop Safety:** Accompany your child to the bus stop and teach them the proper way to get on and off the bus.
- » **Safe Distance:** Remind your child to stand at least six feet from the curb.

» **Crossing Safely:** If your child needs to cross the street in front of the bus, they should walk along the side of the road until they are at least ten feet ahead of the bus, making eye contact with the driver before crossing.

» **Bus Etiquette:** Encourage your child to be respectful on the bus and avoid distracting the driver.

Driving Your Child to School

- » **Follow Speed Limits:** Adhere to school zone speed limits and follow your school's drop-off procedures.
- » **Bus Safety:** Never pass a bus that is loading or unloading children. Yellow flashing lights mean the bus is about to stop, and red lights mean children are getting on or off – drivers must stop in both cases.
- » **Watch for Children:** Make eye contact with children who are crossing the street to ensure they see you.
- » **Crossing Guard Rules:** Always stop when a crossing guard holds a stop sign at a school crossing.
- » **Keep Your Distance:** The area ten feet around a school bus is particularly dangerous. Stay far enough back to allow children to enter and exit safely.

Reminder: Michigan's Distracted Driving Law

Michigan's distracted driving law says that you cannot manually:

- » Make or answer a phone or video call
- » Send or read a text or email message
- » Watch, record, or send a video
- » Access, read, or post on social media
- » Browse the internet
- » Enter information into GPS or a navigation system



By following these safety guidelines, you can help ensure that your child – and every child – has a safe and successful school year.

Who Do You Root For?



Whether you're a Huskie or a Mustang, we can all agree that fall means Friday night football in Portage. Put on your game gear and warm up your "Woo Hoo!" for the annual cross-town rivalry game between the Mustangs of Portage Central and the Huskies of Portage Northern. The game kicks off on Friday, October 11 at 7 PM at Huskie Stadium.

To commemorate this annual rivalry game and celebrate our home town spirit, the City of Portage will display both team's flags on South Westnedge Avenue the week of the game – alternating of course, because we root for both teams! Thanks to First National Bank of Michigan for sponsoring the flag display.



Come out to cheer on your team and see who brings home the Kavanaugh Trophy!

Enhancing Safety and Support

The Role of School Resource Officers in Portage

The Portage Department of Public Safety, in collaboration with the Portage Public School District, is dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of the community. For the 2024-2025 school year, Officer Henry Kite and Officer Kevin Burleson will continue their roles as School Resource Officers (SROs), covering the 14 schools across the district. Their responsibilities extend far beyond traditional policing, contributing to a safe and nurturing learning environment. SRO Burleson covers Northern High, North Middle, and Amberly, Haverhill, 12th Street, and Angling Road Elementary schools, along with the Portage Community Education Center. SRO Kite handles Portage Central High, Central and West Middle, and Central, Lake Center, Moorsbridge, and Woodland Elementary schools.



Officers Kevin Burleson and Henry Kite will serve as School Resource Officers at Portage Public Schools for the 2024-2025 school year.

A Day in the Life of an SRO

Each day for an SRO begins with reviewing any incidents involving students that were reported to the Portage

Department of Public Safety (PDPS). This proactive approach allows SROs to collaborate with school administration and provide additional support as needed. SROs also conduct routine patrols in and around schools, monitor parking lots for safety concerns, and greet students upon arrival.

Additionally, they play a crucial role in student welfare checks, particularly for those who have been absent. In collaboration with school counselors, SROs conduct home visits to ensure students' safety and well-being. They are often called upon to assist with students in crisis, working closely with organizations like Integrated Services of Kalamazoo (ISK) and Gryphon Place to provide mental health support.

Building Relationships and Ensuring Security

One of the core aspects of an SRO's job is building relationships with students. Officers interact with students during lunch, in the hallways, and at extracurricular events, providing a familiar and approachable presence. They offer support, answer questions, and even share a laugh, fostering trust and a sense of security among students.

SROs are also integral to school safety and security. They are part of a multidisciplinary team that works on threat

assessments, identifying concerning behaviors, and implementing interventions to ensure the safety of all students. Trained in active shooter response, Portage SROs are well-prepared to handle any threats that may arise. They also provide training in ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) procedures and work with schools on reunification processes in the event of significant incidents.

More Than Just Police Officers

SROs do enforce criminal laws within the school, but this is only a small part of their role. They work closely with school administration to determine the most appropriate consequences for student behavior, with a focus on rehabilitation and support rather than punishment. Their ultimate goal is to help students correct behaviors before they reach adulthood and face more severe consequences.

Beyond their official duties, SROs become an integral part of the school community. They attend sporting events, board meetings, disciplinary hearings, and parent-student meetings. They also conduct presentations on topics such as drug and alcohol use, vaping, sexting, cyberbullying, and online safety.

SROs are much more than just law enforcement officers – they are mentors, advocates, and protectors, working tirelessly to create a safe and supportive environment for all students. Through their efforts, Portage schools are not just safer, but also places where students can thrive both academically and personally.

YOUR BACKYARD IS BIGGER THAN YOU THINK

Portage Community Art Award Exhibition

Ian Sebastian is the winner of the 7th annual Portage Community Art Award. An exhibition of Ian's work, including his winning piece, will be on display at Portage City Hall from September 5 through October 30 during normal business hours.

The Portage Community Art Award is presented as part of the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts' (KIA) annual West Michigan Area Show (WMAS).



Ian Sebastian's Oil on Canvas
"The hunted"

Earn-A-Bike Youth

Developed by Open Roads, this program for children ages 10 to 16, combines fixing a bike with the development of social-emotional skills. Students will learn how to establish lasting connections, manage emotions, and understand basic bike parts and tools. Bicycles are provided by Portage Parks & Recreation. Upon completing the program, students take home the bike they worked on.

- » Wednesdays, September 11 - October 9, 4:30 - 6:30 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$50 per participant (Registration required by September 9)

Summer Concert Series

Trippin Billies: A Dave Matthews Band Tribute

The final event of the Summer Concert Series is Trippin Billies. With over 20 years of experience, the band brings a high-energy performance and caliber of musicianship that will have you singing along by the second chorus. Bring a chair or blanket with you for lawn seating and leave yourself a little room to dance and get your groove on!



Series Sponsor

arts council
of greater kalamazoo

Kids Fix It! Back To School

Make sure your bike is ready to roll back to school. Kids 6 to 12 years old will learn the ABCs of bicycle maintenance and perform basic repairs in this hands-on program with mechanic

YOU HAVE MORE FRIENDS THAN YOU KNOW

Healthy Eating on a Budget With KVCC

Healthy eating can be efficient, delicious, and affordable too! Culinary and nutrition experts will share their best tips for nutritious cooking on a budget. Learn meal planning to avoid over-purchasing at the store, learn how to expand meals with simple pantry ingredients, discover how to save money while shopping, explore resources available throughout the community to assist, and sample inspirational dishes cooked throughout the class. This informative session will prepare you to engage in cooking with a new can-do perspective. Learning materials included.



- » Tuesday, September 10, 1 - 2:30 PM

» \$45 Members / \$50 Non-Members (Registration required)

Digital Photography for Beginners

This engaging three-class series is for those new to digital photography. Learn the essentials, from mastering camera settings to understanding composition basics with hands-on exercises to apply these concepts.

Portage Parks & Recreation Events, Camps & Classes

1,000 Acres. 20 Parks. One City.

To find out more and register online, visit mypark.portagemi.gov and click the REGISTER NOW! button.

REGISTER NOW!

instructors from Pedal Bicycle! Participants must provide their own bike, helmet, and a chaperone.

- » Saturday, September 14, 9 - 11 AM
- » Millennium Park (280 Romence Road)
- » Rain Location: Celery Flats Pavilion (7335 Garden Lane)
- » \$10 per participant (Registration required)

Oktoberfest

Hosted by the Portage Parks Foundation

Grab dinner and a German beer, enjoy LIVE music and dancing, food & refreshments for purchase, the Family Fun Children's Run, children's activities, and more. The Biergarten opens at 4 PM (non-alcoholic options also available). Proceeds from this event support the Portage park system.



- » Saturday, September 14, 4 - 9 PM
- » South Westnedge Park (9010 South Westnedge Ave)
- » FREE Entrance (No registration required)

40th Annual Peacock Strut Walk/Run – 10K & 5K

This fun fitness event raises funds for the Portage Community Center, the only human services agency in Portage that aids Portage residents to **Make Life Better**. The 10K & 5K courses of the Peacock Strut wind through the beautiful Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Trail. The top three men and women in both the 5K and 10K will receive a plaque. Medals will be available for the top three finishers in each 10-year age category. For more information and to register, visit runsignup.com/Race/MI/Portage/PeacockStrut.



- » Saturday, September 14, 8 AM
- » Grain Elevator (7335 Garden Lane)
- » Packet pick-up: Friday, September 13, 5 - 7 PM & Saturday, September 14, 7 - 8 AM
- » \$32 per participant (Registration required)

Fall Festival

Title Sponsor



Fall in love with autumn in Michigan and celebrate the change of seasons at Fall Festival. Enjoy historical demonstrations such as broom making, glassblowing, cooking and more! Visit with live animals and make memories to take home at our fall

craft station. Celebrate fall on the historical side of Celery Flats with fun activities for the whole family.

- » Sunday, September 22, 10 AM - 2 PM
- » Celery Flats Historical Area (7335 Garden Lane)
- » FREE (No registration required)

League Certified Instructor (LCI) Training

Take your cycling skills to the next level and become a League Certified Instructor (LCI) with the League of American Bicyclists. Participants must pass the Smart Cycling course and have a membership with the League of American Bicyclists. Get your membership at bikeleague.org/join-now. Registration for training is limited to 16 participants and scholarships are available thanks to Pedal Bicycle Shop and Bike Friendly Kalamazoo.

- » Day 1: Friday, September 27, 5 - 9 PM
- » Day 2: Saturday, September 28, 8 AM - 6 PM
- » Day 3: Sunday, September 29, 8 AM - 3 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$575 per participant Registration required by September 6



The Portage Farmers Market is moving to the Portage Zhang Senior Center for the remainder of the season!

Reconstruction of the City Hall parking lot necessitates the relocation of the Portage Farmers Market right across the street to the Portage Zhang Senior Center for the rest of the 2024 market season. Parking is available at the Portage Zhang Senior Center, on Brown Street and Courier Drive, at Portage Parks & Recreation, Comerica Bank and the Portage Community Center.

School might be back in session, but the Portage Farmers Market is still brimming with fresh produce and new finds! From apples to zucchini, our vendors offer a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. Say hello to new bakers who are sure to tantalize your taste bud and new artists who will satisfy your needs for cozy blankets, cuddly crocheted friends, and handmade pottery items for your home. There's something new every week, so be sure to visit often!

The market is open rain or shine every Sunday through October 13, from 9 AM to 1 PM at the Portage Zhang Senior Center. For more information, follow us on social media, visit our website, or stop by the Market Manager booth to learn more about the market.

Portage Zhang Senior Center Events, Activities & Classes

Explore More. Have Fun. Live Well.

Find us at 203 East Centre Avenue | mypzsc.portagemi.gov | To find out more or to register, 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.



Students will come away with a thorough understanding of digital photography basics and begin developing their unique photographic style. Spaces are limited and scholarships are available.

- » Photography Basics, Monday, September 16, 1 - 2 PM
- » Equipment Basics, Monday, September 23, 1 - 2 PM
- » Shooting Basics, Monday, September 30, 1 - 2 PM
- » \$60 Members / \$70 Non-Members (Registration required)

Healthy Feet Series

Join Dr. Jon Deming, DPT, for a 4-week healthy foot lecture series. Get a comprehensive overview of various foot health topics from understanding the causes and symptoms of different types of injuries to treating and preventing them. You will also learn useful information to help keep your feet in good shape and healthy enough to allow your body and lifestyle to remain active. Know your "itis" and understand common foot

ailments, hear about non-invasive treatment options for various foot problems, and learn about foot health, balance, and shoe gear-myths and misconceptions.

- » Wednesdays, September 18 - October 9, 10 - 11 AM
- » FREE (Registration required)

PZSC Cars & Cocktails Fundraiser Car Show



Join us for our fall PZSC Cars & Cocktails Fundraiser Car Show! Enjoy two bars with beer, water, pop, food, and snacks available for purchase (cash or credit/debit) and live music! The entire PZSC parking lot is reserved for car show participants. Show your car, truck, or motorcycle – call 548-4052 for registration information. Thanks to Aetna for generously sponsoring this event.

- » Friday, September 20, 4 - 7 PM
- » FREE and open to the public (Donations accepted)



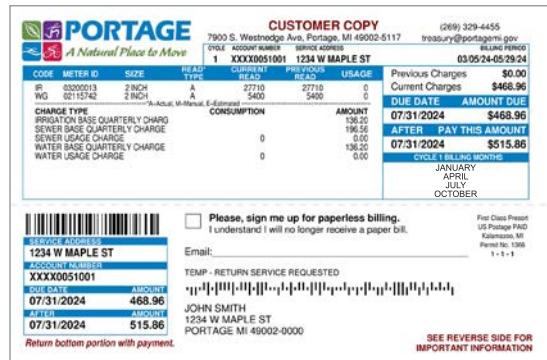
PORTAGER

City Announces Eco-Friendly Utility Billing Initiative

The City of Portage is launching a new initiative to reduce costs and minimize its carbon footprint. The Treasury Office has been hard at work to cut utility billing expenses, lower its environmental impact, and promote paperless billing solutions.

What's Changing?

To further its commitment to sustainability, the City of Portage is transitioning from the traditional full-sheet utility bills to an eco-friendlier 4" x 6" double-sided postcard. This change will not only help reduce the use of paper but also streamline the billing process.



When Will This Happen?

Postcard billing will begin in January 2025. Utility customers will receive an example of the new postcard format on the back of their next quarterly bill.

Why the Change?

Several factors have influenced this decision:

- » **Rising Costs:** With the United States Postal Service planning biannual postage increases until 2027, reducing mailing costs has become increasingly important.
- » **Paper Stock Challenges:** Supply chain disruptions have led to increased costs and shortages in paper stock, making a smaller billing format more accessible.
- » **Environmental Responsibility:** Using less paper aligns with the city's commitment to reducing its environmental impact.

Encouraging Paperless Transactions

In addition to the new postcard format, the city encourages customers to switch to paperless billing and use the Pay-by-Text option. These methods are not only convenient but also contribute significantly to sustainability goals. To take advantage of these options, please visit portagemi.gov and select the "Bill Pay" icon. Click on the "Register or Pay Water/Sewer Bill" and register your utility account. If you are already registered, sign in to your utility account and select sign up for paperless billing or Pay-by-Text.

Thank you for your cooperation and support during this change to benefit both the community and the environment. Questions concerning utility billing can be addressed by calling the Treasury Office at 329-4455.

2024 Summer Property Tax Reminder

Payment for City of Portage 2024 summer property tax bills are due by 5:30 PM on Monday, September 16, 2024. If you did not receive your tax bill, please contact the Portage Treasury Office at 329-4455. Property tax information is updated daily and is available at portagemi.gov; search Property & Tax Lookup. Remember, failure to receive a tax bill does not exempt you from making timely payment. A 3% late fee is charged to all late payments.

Payment Options:

- » **Mail:** Send your payment to the City of Portage. Ensure it's postmarked by September 16, 2024, to avoid late fees.
- » **Drop Box:** Use the 24-hour drop box at City Hall.
- » **Phone:** Call 1-844-943-3997 to pay by phone (fees apply).
- » **Online:** Visit portagemi.gov and use the "Bill Pay" option (fees apply).
- » **Auto Pay:** Set up Auto Pay through the city's website (fees may apply).
- » **Online Banking:** Schedule payment through your bank by August 31, 2024.
- » **In-Person:** Visit the Treasury Office Monday through Thursday, 7:30 AM to 5 PM, and Friday, 8 AM - 12 PM.

Summer Deferment:

Summer taxes may be deferred until February 14, 2025, if your 2023 total household income was less than \$40,000, the property is your primary residence, and you meet one of the following requirements:

- » 62 years of age or older
- » Paraplegic, Hemiplegic or Quadriplegic
- » Totally and Permanently Disabled or Blind
- » Eligible Service person, Veteran, Eligible Widow or Widower

Applications for Summer tax deferments are available at the Treasury Office and must be returned with the bill remittance portion by September 16, 2024.

Contact the Treasury Office at 329-4455 with any questions. Remember, unpaid taxes after March 1, 2025, will be transferred to the Kalamazoo County Treasurer for collection.



7900 South Westnedge Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002-5117
portagemi.gov | (269) 329-4400

ECRWSS

POSTAL CUSTOMER

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
KALAMAZOO, MI
PERMIT NO. 33



City Closing Notices

Non-emergency city offices will be closed on the following dates:

Employee Training Day

» Friday, August 30

Labor Day

» Monday, September 2

Portage City Council

Portage City Council meetings are held twice a month on Tuesdays at 6 PM at Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue) in Council Chambers and are always open to the public.



Mayor Patricia M. Randall
(269) 329-4400
patricia.randall@portagemi.gov



Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson
(269) 303-5459
councilmemberjp@portagemi.gov



Nicole Miller
(269) 924-1901
nicole.miller@portagemi.gov



Terry R. Urban
(269) 323-8160
terry.urban@portagemi.gov

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 or by calling Complaint Resolution at 329-4404.



Chris Burns
(708) 710-3102
chris.burns@portagemi.gov



Vic Ledbetter
(269) 330-6404
vic.ledbetter@portagemi.gov



Jihan Ain Young
(269) 759-0323
jihan.young@portagemi.gov



Patrick McGinnis, City Manager
(269) 329-4400
mcginnip@portagemi.gov

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.

SEPTEMBER 2024

5	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting
9	7:00 PM	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
10	6:00 PM	City Council Meeting
19	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting
24	6:00 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 Portage Creek along the Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Trail.

PORTRAGER Editor
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