

PORTAGER

A Natural Place to Move



A Message from Mayor Patricia M. Randall

Still clinging to the color red, we welcome Valentine's Day! The holiday reaches its roots back to the third century when a physician and priest named Valentinus, was killed on February 14, 270 because he defied the Roman ruler and performed marriage ceremonies for Roman soldiers, which were outlawed at the time. Emperor Claudius II, believing single soldiers were braver than married ones, outlawed any union. Valentinus believed in love and the importance of holy matrimony and that love surpassed all. He refused to heed to the emperor's laws and was punished, immediately becoming a martyr of love symbolized by a heart.

The heart, being the only organ to have a symbol, is recognized world wide and is central to the meaning of Valentine's

Day. As we frame our hands to resemble a heart, love is sent from its very gesture. People around the world recognize this simple shape and many cultures celebrate the holiday.

We all recognize the importance of the heart which is probably why it has crept into so many phrases and idioms of our language.

Heart of gold, sweet heart, follow your heart, from the bottom of my heart, heart to heart, change of heart, broken heart, heart ache, etc.

As the lyrics of many songs bellow the message, good or bad, it is always from the heart.

The heart is a very important organ. Through exercise and diet, we all want to be heart healthy. But, what if you are born without a healthy heart? A congenital disorder that requires a replacement of the heart? The University of Michigan is the only hospital in our state that performs

35-40 pediatric heart transplants a year. Since 1984 only 275 pediatric patients have received new hearts, while thousands wait on the donor list.

I think it deserves note that our students from Portage Northern and Portage Central High Schools raised a record setting \$46,000 recently in their 58th annual Bread Lift Campaign to be donated to C.S. Mott's Children's Hospital for Pediatric Heart Transplants in memorandum of one very special person, Jenna Howard, a local heart transplant recipient.

Also occurring every year on February 14 is National Donor Day, which is an observance dedicated to spreading awareness and education about organ, eye and tissue donation. Paper and candy hearts are nice, but perhaps this year could be about saving another's life by becoming a donor. Think about it. Make it a great month and stay warm!

- Patricia M. Randall



Portage Road 360

Share Your Vision for the Future of Portage Road!

Portage Road 360 is an ambitious design initiative that celebrates the people, businesses, neighborhoods, and public spaces along Portage Road. Its goal is to transform the corridor from East Osterhout Avenue to East Centre Avenue into a safe, walkable, and thriving area, offering everyone more options for living, working, commuting, and recreation. This process builds on the Subarea Plan for the Lake Center District in the City of Portage Master Plan approved in 2024, which calls for improvements like a new traffic signal at Forest Drive and commercial rezoning, but it requires additional community input to refine key design details.

Why Your Input Matters

Community input is essential for the success of Portage Road 360. We're committed to engaging directly with the community to ensure diverse voices shape the future of this project. By gathering feedback from residents, business owners, students, community stakeholders, and visitors, we can create a corridor that is functional, accessible, and welcoming for all. This process helps us prioritize equity, safety, sustainability, and connectivity, ensuring the corridor serves as both a transportation route and a vibrant, inclusive community space.

Recent Community Engagement

On Friday, January 3, 2025, we held a community engagement event at Twelve Baskets Food Pantry to connect with local residents and patrons to gather their valuable insights on street improvements for Portage Road. To maximize participation, we walked along the line of vehicles with clipboards, pens, and surveys, aiming to collect as much community feedback as possible. Over 50 community members participated in our survey.



The first of several Portage Road 360 Community Open Houses took place on January 17 at Presidential Brewing Company, where more than 100 community members gathered to help shape the future of Portage Road in the Lake Center District.



Attendees participated in interactive activities such as mapping activities and feedback exercises to share their thoughts on what makes Portage Road special and what can be improved.

Your insights will guide the next phases of the project. While we've already collected great insights, we need more perspectives to ensure this project reflects the community's collective needs and aspirations. Help create a space that benefits both residents and businesses while making Portage Road a destination, not just a pass-through.

What's Next?

The second open house is set for **Wednesday, February 19, from 5:30 to 7 PM at the Portage Zhang Senior Center (203 East Centre Avenue)**. Participants will assist in setting a vision and framing goals for the Portage Road 360 design process. The event will also involve discussing and prioritizing design ideas and brainstorming ways to transform the corridor into a vibrant community space.

Take Our Survey!

Your feedback is crucial, whether you attend an open house or not. Take a moment to complete the Portage Road 360 Survey to share your ideas and ensure your voice is heard. Scan the QR code or visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/38132282/portage-rd-360-survey.



Questions? Call Transportation & Utilities at 329-4422.

Portage Road 360 is powered by:



POCKET PAY Merchant Spotlight

A'vie Health Salon & Spa



This February, pamper your loved one with a gift from A'vie Health Salon & Spa, our featured Merchant of the Month.

A'vie offers a luxurious array of services, including massages, facials, and spa treatments that are sure to make anyone feel cherished. Whether you're treating your significant other, a best friend, or even yourself, A'vie provides the ultimate relaxation experience.

Give Portage Pocket Pay This Valentine's Day!

Looking for the perfect Valentine's Day gift that's both thoughtful and versatile? Look no further than Portage Pocket Pay! This eGift card program is designed to keep your dollars local, supporting the businesses that make Portage special. With 20 participating merchants, Portage Pocket Pay offers something for everyone – from dining and shopping to unique experiences.

How It Works

Portage Pocket Pay is easy to use! Simply purchase an eGift card online and send it instantly to your recipient via email or text. They can redeem it at participating merchants across Portage, including restaurants, boutiques, salons, and more.

This Valentine's Day, skip the chocolates and flowers and give the gift of choice while supporting local businesses. Learn more and



purchase your Portage Pocket Pay eGift card today at www.portagemi.gov/939.

Together, let's show love to our community and the ones who matter most!

Calling All Portage Businesses!

Want to join this exciting program? Becoming a participating merchant is simple and free! By enrolling, you'll connect with a community-focused initiative that drives customers to your business. To learn more about Portage Pocket Pay or sign up, visit www.portagemi.gov/939 or contact the Office of the City Manager at 329-4404.

Participating Pocket Pay Merchants

- Air Zoo
- Airway Lanes NEW
- Alibi
- Art Bayou
- A'Vie Salon Spa
- Chicken Coop (Westnedge) NEW
- ChocolaTea
- Franco's Italian Pizzeria
- Hobby-Sports.com NEW
- Jac's Cekola's Pizza (Westnedge)
- Kalamazoo Candle Company NEW
- Liberty Square Furniture
- Monelli's
- Pinspiration NEW
- Presidential Brewing Co.
- Schuring Greenhouse
- Taco Bob's (Centre Avenue)
- The Pantry on Tap
- Trove
- Wings Etc. (Westnedge) NEW
- » Your Business Name Here «

Board of Review to Meet in March

The City of Portage Board of Review, appointed by the City Council, is responsible for hearing property tax valuation appeals from Portage property owners. The board may address property valuation (SEV), assessment roll classification changes, and Property Tax Poverty Exemption requests.

2025 Assessment Change Notices

The City of Portage will mail Annual Assessment Change Notices for all real properties the week of February 17, 2025. These notices contain critical information, including:

- » Changes in assessed and taxable values from 2024 to 2025
- » The status of the Principal Residence Exemption (PRE)
- » Whether the property's taxable value was uncapped due to an ownership transfer

Please note that delivery times may vary. If you do not receive your notice shortly after this time frame, contact the Office of the City Assessor for assistance.

Discuss Property Valuations with the Assessor

Property owners are encouraged to address any questions or concerns about their property assessments with the Office of the City Assessor before the 2025 Assessment Roll is certified. After the roll is certified and forwarded to the Board of Review, the City Assessor cannot make any changes to property valuations for 2025.

Many concerns can be resolved before appearing – or without needing to appear – before the Board of Review. Certain questions, such as those related to assessment change notices, can often be handled over the phone. However, more detailed inquiries may require an informal review with the assessing staff.

To ensure ample time for discussion, property owners must contact the Office of the City Assessor no later than Friday, February 28, 2025.

Board of Review

If you believe your property valuation is inaccurate, and assessing staff were not able to address your concerns (see *Discuss Property Valuations with the Assessor*), you may appear before the March Board of Review to appeal the valuation.

The Board of Review will meet on Tuesday, March 4 at 8:30 AM for their Organizational Meeting.

Appointments to meet with the Board of Review can be made on the following dates:

- » Monday, March 10, 9 AM to 12 PM & 1:30 PM to 4:30 PM
- » Tuesday, March 11, 9 AM to 12 PM & 1:30 PM to 4:30 PM
- » Wednesday, March 12, 1:30 PM to 4:30 PM & 6 PM to 9 PM
- » Thursday, March 13, 9 AM to 12 PM & 1:30 PM to 4:30 PM

The Board will then meet on Tuesday, March 25 at 9 AM to finalize the roll.

How to Appeal to the Board of Review

Property owners wishing to appeal to the Board of Review can schedule an appointment by calling the Office of the City Assessor at 329-4433. Alternatively, appeals can be submitted in writing.

Written appeals must be received by the Office of the City Assessor no later than 5:30 PM on Wednesday, March 12, 2025. These appeals must include:

- » A completed Form L-4035: Petition to the Board of Review (available at portagemi.gov/156)
- » Any supporting documentation (see *Preparing for an Assessment Review or Appeal*)

You may submit written appeals by:

- » Mail (7900 South Westnedge Avenue, Portage, MI 49002)
- » Email (assessingdept@portagemi.gov)
- » In-person drop-off at the Office of the City Assessor
- » 24-hour drop box at City Hall

All appeals, including written submissions, must be received before the final meeting of the March Board of Review.

Understanding Taxable Value Changes and Property Assessments for 2025

Taxable value changes are capped by the Inflation Rate Multiplier (IRM) set annually by the State Tax Commission, unless new construction or a transfer of ownership (uncapping event) has occurred. For 2025, the IRM is 1.031, meaning taxable values may increase by up to 3.1% unless:

- » New construction or physical changes have been made to the property
- » Omitted property has been identified
- » Ownership of the property has transferred

Under Michigan law, the selling price of a property is not the presumptive true cash value. While the selling price is considered, it is not the sole factor in determining a property's assessed value. The Assessor and the Board of Review rely on many factors to determine a property's value, ensuring a fair and equitable assessment process.

Preparing for an Assessment Review or Appeal

Property owners meeting with assessing staff or appealing to the Board of Review are encouraged to provide supporting documentation to strengthen their case, such as:

- » Documentation of recent sales of comparable homes in the neighborhood
- » Current appraisals of the property
- » Receipts or invoices for recent construction or improvements
- » Photographs showing property damage or deterioration
- » Other information pertinent to the property's assessment

The City Assessor may also provide evidence supporting the valuation listed on the assessment roll or use the information during the review process to make any necessary or required adjustments.

If property owners are unsatisfied with the results of the Assessor's review process, they retain the right to appeal to the Board of Review for further consideration.

Questions? Call the Office of the City Assessor at 329-4433.

Do you Qualify for a 2025 Property Tax Poverty Exemption?

The City of Portage Board of Review may approve a property tax exemption for residents who meet poverty income level guidelines. To qualify for this annual exemption, applicants must:

1. Be currently receiving the Principal Residence Exemption (PRE)
2. Meet the income and asset requirements outlined below

City of Portage Income Guidelines	
Household Size*	Maximum Income
1 person	\$18,825
2 persons	\$25,550
3 persons	\$32,275
4 persons	\$39,000
5 persons	\$45,725
6 persons	\$52,450
7 persons	\$59,175
8 persons	\$65,900

*For households with more than 8 persons, add \$6,725 for each additional person.

Applicants must provide proper documentation of income, such as:

- » Federal and state income tax returns for all individuals residing in the principal residence
- » An affidavit for any residents not required to file federal or state income tax returns for the current or preceding tax year

In addition, household assets (excluding the principal residence) must not exceed \$25,000 and must be reported on the application. A list of all required documentation is included on the application form.

The Property Tax Poverty Exemption Application Form is available at the Office of the City Assessor or at portagemi.gov/156. To ensure consideration at the March Board of Review, completed applications must be submitted to the Office of the City Assessor by March 3, 2025.

The Board of Review will evaluate applications based on the City of Portage income and asset guidelines. Applicants are not required to appear in person. Note: Exemptions granted are subject to audit by the Michigan Department of Treasury.

For questions or additional details, contact the Office of the City Assessor at 329-4433.

Make a Splash This Summer Join the Ramona Park Beach Team!



Looking for an exciting summer job? Ramona Park Beach is hiring Lifeguards (Red Cross Certification preferred) and Concession Staff for the upcoming recreation season, running mid-May through Labor Day. Shifts vary, offering 30-40 hours per week, including weekends and holidays.

Enjoy a fun, service-oriented work environment where you'll help ensure beach safety and enhance visitors' experiences. Lifeguard Certification is provided for all hires!

Applicants must be 16 years or older. Apply online at portagemi.gov/200 or visit the Department of Human Resources at City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue). For more information, call 329-4533 or text 998-1385.

Join the award-winning City of Portage Parks & Recreation team and experience the vibrant community that draws visitors from across Michigan.

The City of Portage is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Food Scraps Recycling Program Expands Due to High Demand!

The City of Portage is excited to share that the new Food Scraps Recycling Program has been a hit with residents! Due to the overwhelming participation, we've partnered with My Green Michigan to deliver an additional cart to each of the ten drop-off locations. Your enthusiasm for sustainable practices is making a real difference!



Food scrap recycling offers numerous environmental benefits. By diverting food waste from landfills, we reduce the production of harmful methane gas – a greenhouse gas over 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere. Each year, food waste contributes to approximately 8-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Instead of being wasted, food scraps are transformed into nutrient-rich compost, which improves soil health by enhancing its structure and fertility, increasing water retention, and reducing erosion. Composting can also cut the need for chemical fertilizers by up to 30%, further decreasing environmental pollution. This process not only helps combat climate change but also supports a more sustainable and resilient future for our community.

For complete program details, including a list of acceptable items and drop-off locations, visit portagemi.gov/933. For questions, contact the Department of Public Works at 329-4444.

Together, we can make Portage a leader in sustainability!

Sources: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)



RECYCLE BATTERIES!

We accept many types and sizes of batteries, visit our website for details.



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

This service is provided by the Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste Center through a City of Portage dedicated, voter-approved millage.



YOUR BACKYARD IS BIGGER THAN YOU THINK

Portage Community Art Award Call to Artists

The City of Portage invites Portage residents to participate in the 8th Annual **Portage Community Art Award** in collaboration with the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts' (KIA) annual West Michigan Area Show (WMAS).

The WMAS is a juried exhibition showcasing the visual arts talent from a 14-county region. The exhibition features a diverse array of artworks including paintings, prints, photographs, mosaics, ceramics, jewelry, sculpture, quilts, wood turnings, and mixed-media.

To be eligible for the City of Portage award of \$1,000, the winning artist must be a resident of Portage, Michigan. All artwork submitted must reflect the city's theme, *A Natural Place to Move!*, and the winning artwork must be available for display at Portage City Hall for one year. In addition, the winner will need a minimum of 12 to 20 additional works of art of any medium for an exhibition in Portage City Hall. A private reception and unveiling of the winning work of art along with their accompanying exhibition will occur in September 2025.

Artists are invited to submit their entries following the guidelines available on the KIA website at www.kiarts.org. Submissions will be accepted from March 1 to April 20, 2025.

Black History Month Local Artist Display

The City of Portage proudly presents the inaugural **Black History Month Local Artist Display** and is honored to announce the 2025 winning artist, Sharmane Flanders, who received an award of \$500.

To be eligible for the Black History Month Local Artist Display award and exhibition, applicants needed to be current residents of Portage, Michigan, possess a body of work that reflected the theme of honoring "Black History Month" and/or "Black Futures in Portage," and have at least five works of art available for exhibition.

Thank you to the Portage Cultural Arts Committee for reviewing submissions and selecting Ms. Flanders as the inaugural winner. Her exhibition features 2D works in various mediums and a ceramic piece.

» February 3 - March 28, during business hours
» City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue)



KALAMAZOO
INSTITUTE
OF ARTS

YOU HAVE MORE FRIENDS THAN YOU KNOW

Calling All Soup Enthusiasts!

The PZSC Soup Cook-Off is just around the corner, and we're searching for the best soup recipes in town! This is your chance to showcase your culinary skills and represent your organization in a fun and flavorful competition. Community partners, we want you to join the fun! If your organization is ready to take on the challenge and thinks it has what it takes to create the best soup in town, call Nicki at (269) 548-4052 to enter. Three awards will be on the line: Judge's Choice, People's Choice, and the highly coveted Chef's Kiss Award. Whether you're a competitor or a taster, there's a place for everyone. PZSC members and the public are invited to attend, taste, and vote for their favorites.

» Tuesday, February 18, 3 - 5 PM
» FREE and open to the public (Registration required)

On the Back 9 – Music for All Ages

Get ready for an unforgettable musical experience with On the Back 9, a dynamic duo of best friends who have been performing together for over 40 years. Starting as a duo in the 1970s, Jeff and Bill expanded their talents to full bands

Portage Parks & Recreation Events, Camps & Classes

1,000 Acres. 20 Parks. One City.

The Portage Parks system is multi-faceted with activities and opportunities for families and people of all ages. To find out more and register online, visit www.mypark.portagemi.gov and click



REGISTER NOW!

Creative Corners: Valentine's Day Cards

Create personalized Valentine's for your friends and loved ones. Explore different art mediums during this make-and-take class.

Tailored to students with special needs and artists of all abilities, Creative Corners students follow a lead artist through each project while adding their personal touch. Participants are encouraged to bring a chaperone (fee waived for chaperones). Please wear clothing that can get messy. The fee covers art supplies and tools. Artwork designed during this program may be featured in future art exhibits.

- » Wednesday, February 5, 6 - 7 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$5 per participant (Registration required)

Zoo to You: Plant and Animal Connections

Meet ambassador animals from John Ball Zoo! Learn to recognize connections between animals and plants and discover how these relationships impact the flow of energy through an ecosystem. The presentation begins at 11 AM; arrive by 10:45 AM to be seated. A chaperone must accompany participants under the age of 18. Children ages 3 or younger may attend for free.



- » Saturday, February 22, 10:45 AM - 12 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$5 per participant (Registration required)

Candle Crafting Workshop with Yoga Flow

Unwind and create a uniquely scented candle with Natural Habitat Candle Company to take home and enjoy. While waiting for your candle to set, relax with a guided yoga session from Apral Milan-Corcoran of Sunshine and Pebbles Yoga. The fee includes all candle-making supplies. Yoga mats will be provided, but you may bring your own if you wish.

Kindling Kinship – "Galentine's" Day Workshop

Ready to celebrate "Galentine's" Day with your bestie? Kindle the flames of friendship with a relaxing yoga flow and craft a candle infused with essential oils and wonderful memories.

- » Thursday, February 13, 7 - 8:30 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$35 per participant (Registration required by February 12)

Portage Zhang Senior Center Events, Activities & Classes

Explore More. Have Fun. Live Well.

Find us at 203 East Centre Avenue | www.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 adult.

Membership and participation 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.



over the decades before taking a break in the 1990s. In 2022, Jeff convinced Bill to return to his acoustic roots, and the result is a performance that spans six decades of iconic music. Enjoy timeless hits from Rock, Pop, R&B, and Country, featuring artists like Neil Diamond, Marvin Gaye, 3 Doors Down, Bruno Mars, and Blake Shelton. With something for everyone, it's the perfect mix of sing-alongs, dancing, and a touch of humor. Cash bar, pop, and bottled water are available for purchase.

- » Thursday, February 20, 4 - 6 PM
- » \$10 per person and open to the public (Registration required)

Mandala Painting Workshop

Traditionally a symbol of the cosmos, mandalas are circular geometric designs that you'll learn to create using acrylic paints. Cindy Semark will guide you through designing your 8-inch mandala, teaching an easy technique to get started. You'll also dive into color theory, discovering how colors work together and practicing tints and shades to enhance

Soulful Flames – Valentine's Day Workshop

Sign up today for a romantic, relaxing, and fun-filled Valentine's Day date night. Create a uniquely scented candle and experience a relaxing yoga session in one charming evening.

- » Friday, February 14, 7 - 8:30 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$35 per participant (Registration required by February 13)

Portage Farmers Market Vendor Meeting

Have you ever considered selling your products at the Portage Farmers Market? Whether you're a new entrepreneur, a returning vendor, or



looking to introduce your business to a new audience, join us for an informational meeting. Learn what it takes to become a vendor and get the latest updates on the market's future plans.

- » Thursday, February 27, 6:30 - 8 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » FREE (No registration required)

Terra Talks: Shoreline Living

Speaker: Erin Fuller, Van Buren Conservation District

Portage is home to lakes, bogs, fens, and sensitive conservation wetland areas. Find out how protecting the shoreline in your own backyard can achieve incredible results. Erin Fuller, a Water Quality Project Manager, discusses how to attract pollinators, hummingbirds, and butterflies to your backyard, reduce yard maintenance, keep pesky geese at bay, attract native wildlife, and cultivate a beautiful backyard oasis year-round.

- » Friday, February 28, 6 - 7 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » FREE (Registration required)

Valentine's Day Skate

Bring that special someone to the Millennium Park Ice Rink for a night of skating to your favorite love songs!



- » Friday, February 14, 7 - 9 PM
- » Ice Rink at Millennium Park (280 Romence Road)
- » \$5 Open Skate | \$3 Skate Rental (No registration required)

Portage Zhang Senior Center Events, Activities & Classes

Explore More. Have Fun. Live Well.

Find us at 203 East Centre Avenue | www.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 adult.

Membership and participation 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.

your design. Choose a color scheme that complements your style or home décor, and bring your mandala to life. A mat will be provided for your finished piece, making it ready for framing and a personalized addition to your space. No experience is required – just bring your creativity and enjoy the process!



- » Monday, February 24 & Wednesday, February 26, 3 - 5 PM
- » \$30 Members / \$35 Non-Members (Registration required)

Travel Presentation – Collette

At this in-person presentation with Jerard Welch of Collette at the PZSC, you'll learn about the fun and exciting trips offered through Collette for 2025. Jerard will present details on France Magnifique & Discover Spotlight on the New York City Holiday! Space is limited.

- » Tuesday, February 25, 2025, 1:30 - 3:30 PM
- » FREE (Registration required)

PORTAGER

2024 Winter Property Taxes

On November 27, the 2024 winter tax bills for the City of Portage were mailed and payments are due by 5 PM on Friday, February 14, 2025.

Property owners should call the Treasury Office at 329-4455 if you haven't receive a winter tax bill. Failure to receive a tax bill does not relieve the you of the responsibility for payment of the tax and applicable fees. To quickly access your property tax information and pay online, scan the QR code located on the front of your bill or visit portagemi.gov. Property tax information is updated daily.

Payment Options

USPS Mail: Mail your payment to the City of Portage Treasury Office, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue, Portage, MI 49002-5117. Please include your payment and the bottom portion of your tax statement. Payment by check authorizes the city to convert the check to an electronic funds transfer and your bank account may be debited as soon as the same day the city receives the check payment. To avoid a 3% late fee, **mailed payments must be postmarked by the U.S. Post Office on or before February 14, 2025**, and received by the city no later than February 21, 2025. In all late payment disputes, the Portage Treasury Office will rely on the postmark applied by the Postmaster (metered postmarks are not accepted).

Drop Box: A 24-hour drop box is located at the south Exit Only door of City Hall at 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. Look for the "Night Drop Box" sign near the curb. Include the bottom portion of your tax statement with your payment. Payments deposited after 7:30 AM may be processed on the



same business day. Payments deposited after 5:30 PM or on weekends are processed on the next business day.

Online or Phone Payments: Pay online with a credit/debit card (3% fee, \$2.95 minimum) or E-check payment (\$2.50 fee). Visit portagemi.gov and click on the Bill Pay icon. Phone payments can be made by calling (844) 943-3997 (3% + \$0.75 fee).

Auto Pay: Visit portagemi.gov and click the "Bill Pay" icon on the home page to set up auto payment of your recurring tax bill. Select **Bill Pay** "Register" or "Pay Current Taxes" and register your account. Then go to *My Profile > Payment Methods > Add new credit/debit card OR Add new bank*. Once you have entered and confirmed your information, select "set up auto-pay." Payment will be debited from your account on the tax due date. A 3% fee, \$2.95 minimum applies when using a credit/debit card; **no fee when using a checking or savings account**.

Online Banking: Pay through your financial institution's online bill pay. First, contact your bank to confirm that they honor tax payments through their system. Use your parcel number as your account number. Online banking payments should be scheduled no later than February 4, 2025, to ensure timely delivery of funds to the City of Portage to avoid late fees.

In Person at City Hall: Visit the Treasury Office located at Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. The Treasury Office is open Monday to Thursday, 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Friday, 8 AM to 12 PM (**open until 5 PM on February 14 and 28**).

All 2024 real estate property taxes that remain unpaid on March 1, 2025, will be turned over to the Kalamazoo County Treasurer for collection where additional fees will be added.

Questions regarding tax bills may be directed to the City of Portage Treasury Office at 329-4455.

Assistance with Utility Bills from the Portage Community Center

If you've received a utility shut-off notice from the City of Portage and need help paying your utility bills, the Portage Community Center (PCC) may be able to assist. Read on to understand the application process and the documents you need to gather.



Start by completing the PCC intake process, which you can initiate by contacting PCC at 323-1942 or visiting their office at 325 East Centre Avenue, Monday through Thursday from 9 AM to 5 PM and Friday from 8 AM to 12 PM. You'll need to provide a copy of your utility shut-off notice issued by the City of Portage and several types of documents to verify your eligibility.

For the head of your household, a valid, government-issued photo ID is required. Additionally, all household members aged 21 and older must provide proof of income or proof of no income. Acceptable documents for income include recent pay stubs, benefit letters, unemployment paperwork, or Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) documentation. If there is no income, documents such as a HUD lease, a termination of employment letter, or a zero-income certification from an agency can be used.

You'll also need to verify your residency with a current bill, official mail, or any income verification document showing your address. For household members under 21, acceptable proof includes a Social Security card, birth certificate, Medicaid card, or DHHS paperwork.

PCC staff will guide you through the process and answer any questions you may have. After submission, be sure to stay in touch with their team for updates or additional requests.



The Portage Community Center is dedicated to helping residents in need. Reach out to them today to start your application and ensure you receive the support you need to keep your utilities running.



7900 South Westnedge Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002-5160
portagemi.gov | (269) 329-4400

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

ECRWSS

POSTAL CUSTOMER

Snow Removal Reminders

Let's work together to keep Portage sidewalks safe and walkable this winter!

- » Businesses, renters and property owners – clear your sidewalk so that everyone can get around safely and comfortably. **Sidewalks must be cleared within 24 hours of snowfall and within 12 hours of ice forming.**
- » Don't forget, as snow accumulates through the winter and snow banks grow taller, **please keep fire hydrants clear of snow and ice**.
- » And **keep bus stops adjacent to your property clear of snow and ice** to help school children and public transit users safely enter and exit buses.



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.

FEBRUARY 2025

6	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting
10	7:00 PM	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
11	6:00 PM	City Council Meeting
20	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting
25	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 the annual Youth Advisory Committee Winter Snow Party at Oakland Drive Park.

PORTRAGER Editor
Mary Beth Block | blockm@portagemi.gov