

# PORTAGER

A Natural Place to Move



## A Message from Mayor Patricia M. Randall

“Up close and personal,” one saying goes. “Never criticize until you have walked in another’s shoes,” goes another.

New situations can be hard to relate to. Here are a few examples:

- » Securing daycare for a new child
- » Filing a “total loss” insurance claim
- » Parenting attentively without hovering

Aging, while watching those around you do so, is another challenge awaiting all of us. We all want to age in place with grace and dignity. We all crave our independence and want to keep it. Our reliance on the ability to drive, is life changing when the keys are best set aside or taken by a loved one.

The Portage Zhang Senior Center is a true testament that

our community embraces the aging population. We built it and they came! The incredible surge in enrollment from 1,350 in 2022 to 4,262 today makes it official: The City of Portage is an Age-Friendly Community. Our center offers a wide array of programming and is now 80% self funding through membership and class fees and our popular travel program. To have this center cover most of the costs of operation has been a huge financial gift to our city.

As we strive to recognize the ever-changing needs of our community, it became important to support those with diminishing memory and support their care givers. As we recognized this need, we wanted to be a welcoming space for the individuals with memory loss and their care providers to connect, share experiences and enjoy activities that support cognitive health through education and awareness. New to our offerings is a Memory Café which meets monthly to provide a safe and supportive environment for participants to bond with others facing similar challenges. Skilled staff and dedicated volunteers

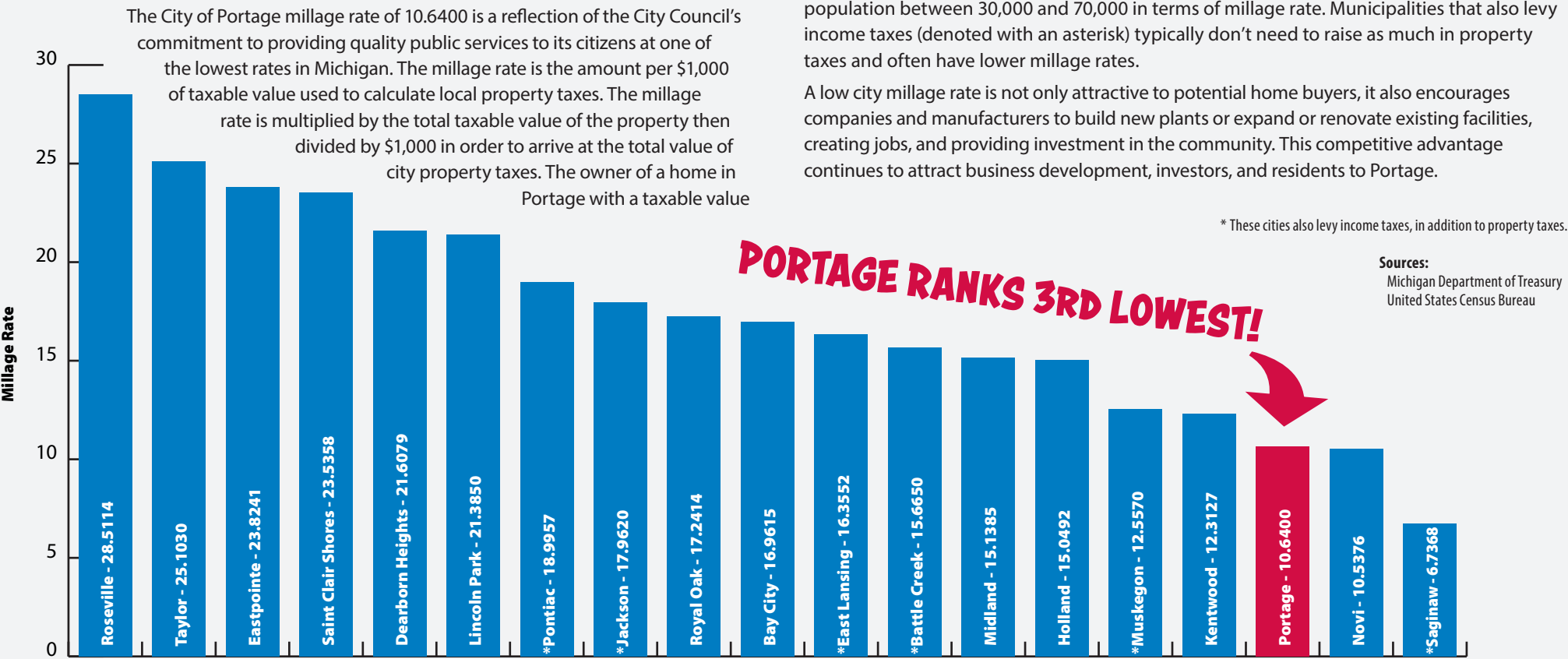
provide activities to encourage socialization to reduce feelings of isolation.

The entire city staff have participated in the training to help recognize and assist people with memory loss. It is our goal to offer this training to area businesses and their employees to help serve our aging population. To address seniors unable to drive, we offer transportation for members living in the Portage city limits who wish to participate in the many offerings at our facility. This free service is only offered with the assistance of willing volunteers drivers. Please help us meet this need by volunteering.

As one becomes more attuned to those around them, it’s not uncommon to see a person struggling to help a senior get in or out of a car; a senior holding a doll on a plane, or someone struggling to place an order at a fast-food restaurant’s kiosk. Patience is required to navigate the realization that one day this could happen to one of our parents...or ourself.

– Patricia M. Randall

## Portage Millage Rate Ranks Low Among Similar-Sized Michigan Cities





## POCKET PAY

### Merchant Spotlight

### Hobby-Sports.com

9782 Portage Road

Hobby-Sports.com is a local, family-owned hobby store serving Southwest Michigan for over 35 years! We love supporting our community, are passionate about what we do, and want to share this enthusiasm with our customers through personal, hands-on service. Hobby-Sports.com offers radio-controlled cars, trucks, airplanes, boats, helicopters, and drones. We also carry LEGO, models, rockets, trains, slot cars, and more. Stop by today to have fun on our race track or enjoy watching a train run. Located at 9782 Portage Road, just 2 miles south of West Centre Avenue, we are open Monday through Friday from 10 AM to 6 PM, Saturday from 10 AM to 4 PM, and Sunday from 12 to 4 PM.

Visit [portagemi.gov/PocketPay](http://portagemi.gov/PocketPay) to learn more about becoming a Portage Pocket Pay merchant or to purchase an e-gift card.



## Portage Launches Plastic Bag Recycling Initiative

Portage residents now have a new way to recycle plastic bags and film thanks to a collaborative effort between the Portage Environmental Board and the Portage Youth Advisory Committee (YAC). This initiative, which aims to reduce plastic waste by providing convenient drop-off locations, is part of a one-year Recycling Challenge with NexTrex ([nextrex.com](http://nextrex.com)).

### How to Participate

Residents can bring their plastic bags and film to a designated collection bin inside Portage City Hall during normal business hours:

- » Monday - Thursday: 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM
- » Friday: 8 AM - 12 PM

Additionally, students at Portage Northern and Portage Central High Schools can contribute through collection bins at their schools, with their environmental clubs actively gathering plastic bags to support the initiative.


## What Can Be Recycled?

- » Grocery bags
- » Retail/department store bags
- » Bread bags
- » Produce bags
- » Plastic outer wrap (from water bottles, paper towels, etc.)
- » Resealable food bags (clean and dry)
- » Bubble wrap and air pillows (popped)
- » Newspaper sleeves
- » Dry cleaning bags
- » Cereal and cracker box liners

All materials should be clean, dry, and free of food residue before being dropped off.

To learn more about how recycled bags are transformed into new materials, visit [youtu.be/ZDNFXtMu6M0](https://youtu.be/ZDNFXtMu6M0).

By working together, Portage residents and students can make a meaningful impact on reducing plastic waste in the community. Drop off your plastic bags today!





# Portage Road 360: What’s Next?



Portage Road 360 Open House #2 was a great success, with more than 100 community members in attendance. Participants provided valuable feedback, shared ideas, and completed the Portage Road 360 survey to help shape the future of the corridor. The survey is now closed, and the input gathered will guide the development of conceptual design options.

These designs will be unveiled at Portage Road 360 Open House #3 on Wednesday, April 16, at the Portage Zhang Senior Center from 5:30 to 7 PM.

## Construction on Portage Road

In the second half of 2025, a new traffic signal will be installed at the intersection of Portage Road and Forest Drive. The first phase of Portage Road 360 construction would not start until 2026 and is expected to stretch from near Bacon Avenue to Lakeview Drive. The timing of future phases would be subject to funding availability.

Thank you to everyone who participated in Open House #2 – we look forward to sharing the next steps with you!



# Meet the Community Engagement & Resolution Team – CERT

The Portage Department of Public Safety (PDPS) Community Engagement and Resolution Team (CERT) is committed to building strong relationships throughout Portage and enhancing public safety using innovative, non-traditional policing methods. Through crime prevention, education, and targeted enforcement efforts, CERT works to reduce crime and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors. The team also assists patrol officers and the Detective Bureau in addressing chronic criminal activity.



Meet the CERT team: (left to right) Officer Matthew Martin, Sergeant Kyle Doster, Officer Lacey Fisher, Officer Brandon Hambright.

## Neighborhood Engagement & Crime Prevention

Portage is home to many thriving neighborhoods, and CERT officers play a crucial role in keeping them safe. Each officer is assigned a specific crime prevention district, where they establish and maintain relationships with community leaders, neighborhood watch organizations, apartment complex and mobile home park management, and condominium associations.

## Targeted Enforcement

- CERT is responsible for addressing persistent issues that impact public safety and quality of life through focused enforcement activities, including:
- » Speeding & traffic enforcement
  - » Property crime patrols
  - » Retail theft prevention
  - » Surveillance for suspicious/drug activity
  - » Alcohol, tobacco, and vaping compliance checks

## Programs & Services

- Community Training**
- CERT is dedicated to educating residents on crime prevention and emergency preparedness. The team offers presentations on various topics, including:
- » CRASE (Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events)
  - » Child passenger car seat installation & safety
  - » Cyber fraud and internet scams
  - » Mental Health Services

In partnership with Integrated Services of Kalamazoo (ISK), CERT provides emergency mental health support and crisis follow-up welfare checks. A dedicated ISK social worker joins CERT officers on patrol, offering specialized assistance during crises where mental health expertise is essential.

**Private Security Camera Registration**

Residents and businesses with security cameras can register their locations with the Portage Department of Public Safety (PDPS). This voluntary program allows investigators to quickly identify nearby cameras that may have captured evidence of a crime or disturbance. Registration does not

grant automatic access to footage – PDPS will contact registered participants if a review is needed, and camera owners retain the right to decline any request. To register your security camera, visit [portagemi.gov/345](http://portagemi.gov/345).

- Community Engagement & Outreach**
- CERT actively fosters positive connections throughout Portage by organizing, hosting, and participating in a variety of community events, including:
- » Coffee with a Cop – Informal meet-and-greet events at local venues
  - » Pig Out with Public Safety – A back-to-school event where students meet School Resource Officers and receive backpacks filled with supplies
  - » Safety Presentations – Engaging sessions tailored for older adults, scouting troops, youth organizations, and individuals with special needs
  - » Block Parties & National Night Out – Strengthening community ties through neighborhood gatherings
  - » School & Summer Camp Visits – Interacting with students to promote safety awareness
  - » Safety Meetings – Collaborations with apartment complex managers on security strategies
  - » Retail Loss Prevention Meetings – Partnering with local businesses to prevent theft and fraud

Through these efforts, CERT continues to enhance public trust, promote safety, and strengthen the sense of community in Portage. To reach the CERT team, please call 324-9255.

# Spring Forward & Stay Safe

## Test and Replace Smoke Alarm Batteries

As we prepare to spring forward on Sunday, March 9, and set our clocks ahead for Daylight Saving Time, the Portage Department of Public Safety – Fire Division urges residents to take a moment to test and replace smoke alarm batteries. This simple habit could save lives.



## The Reality of Home Fires

- Home fires remain a significant threat in the United States. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA):
- » A home structure fire is reported every 95 seconds.
  - » One civilian fire-related injury occurs every 52 minutes.
  - » One home fire-related death occurs every three hours.
- In 2023 alone, there were nearly 1.4 million fires, resulting in:
- » 3,670 civilian deaths
  - » 13,350 injuries

While fire-related deaths have decreased by 43 percent since 1980, recent years have seen an increase in home fire fatalities, with a rate of 8.7 deaths per 1,000 home fires in 2023, which is 22 percent higher than in 1980.

- Most fatal fires occur in:
- » One- and two-family homes (67.8 percent of fire deaths).
  - » Apartment buildings (10.9 percent of fire deaths).

## Know Your Smoke Alarm

- Smoke alarms are the first line of defense in a fire—but only if they work. Here’s what you need to know:
- » 10-Year Non-Replaceable Battery Alarms – Designed to last up to 10 years. If the alarm chirps, signaling a low battery, replace the entire unit immediately.
  - » Replaceable Battery Alarms – These alarms need a fresh battery at least once a year. If the alarm chirps, replace the battery right away.
  - » Follow Manufacturer Guidelines – Always use the battery type recommended by the manufacturer to ensure proper function.

## Take Action: Fire Safety Checklist

- With home fire deaths on the rise, it is more important than ever to make fire safety a priority. As you change your clocks on March 9, take a few extra minutes to:
- » Test your smoke alarms to ensure they are working properly.
  - » Replace batteries in alarms that require them.
  - » Check the manufacture date on all smoke alarms and replace any unit over 10 years old.
  - » Remind family and friends to do the same.

For more fire safety tips, visit the NFPA’s website at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org).

The Portage Fire Division is committed to keeping the community safe. A few minutes of prevention today could save lives tomorrow.

# National Flood Insurance Program

For more than 40 years, the City of Portage has actively participated in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), administered by FEMA. The program provides affordable flood insurance to property owners and encourages communities to adopt and administer floodplain management regulations.

As a participant, Portage helps protect structures from flood damage through design and construction standards for Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs). Property owners in these areas can access discounted flood insurance.

The City of Portage Department of Community Development maintains flood maps, base flood elevations (BFE), and other resources to help property owners determine if their property is in or near an SFHA. The department also tracks elevation certificates and Letters of Map Amendment (LOMAs), which can remove properties from designated flood zones.

Most homeowners’ insurance policies do not cover flood damage. Special flood insurance is required and is only available in NFIP-participating communities like Portage. If you don’t have flood insurance, contact your provider to explore your options.

- The Department of Community Development offers:
- » Flood zone determinations based on the latest Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM).
  - » Site-specific flood data, including FIRM zones, floodways, and BFEs.
  - » Information on mandatory flood insurance requirements for federally backed mortgages.
  - » Access to processed Elevation Certificates and LOMAs.

For assistance, contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4477. Additional floodplain resources are available through the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) at [www.michigan.gov/deq](http://www.michigan.gov/deq).





The Spring Curbside Collections feature separate pickup dates for household materials and for loose brush and bagged leaves. Details on household materials collection are provided on this page, while information on loose brush and bagged leaves can be found on the next page. **Questions? Contact the Department of Public Works at 329-4444 or visit [portage.mi.gov/279](http://portage.mi.gov/279).**

The Spring Cleanup Program and Curbside Brush Collection Program are not performed for commercial establishments, churches or schools or on private streets. The programs can be conducted on private streets, only after every property owner on the private street has signed an indemnification form. Please contact the Department of Public Works at 329-4444 with any questions concerning collection on private streets.

2025 Spring Cleanup Program: March 31 - May 1



Every spring, the City of Portage conducts the Spring Cleanup Program, giving residents the opportunity to reduce household clutter and eliminate unwanted household items by placing them at the curb for pickup.

The map below indicates the scheduled pickup date for each neighborhood. Arrows on the map show which side of the street will be picked up when a boundary line falls between different dates. Collection dates and a handy Address Locator Tool are also available at [portage.mi.gov/283](http://portage.mi.gov/283).

Collection occurs only once in each neighborhood zone, so it is important to place items at the curb by 7 AM on your scheduled pickup date. Materials may be placed curbside up to three days before the collection date.

Spring Cleanup Program Reminders

- » The City of Portage has no responsibility for items removed from the curbside by private parties.
- » Collection will occur only once in each zone.
- » All accepted items placed at the curb will be collected, so please ensure children’s toys are kept clear of this area.
- » Please separate trash and metal at the curb.

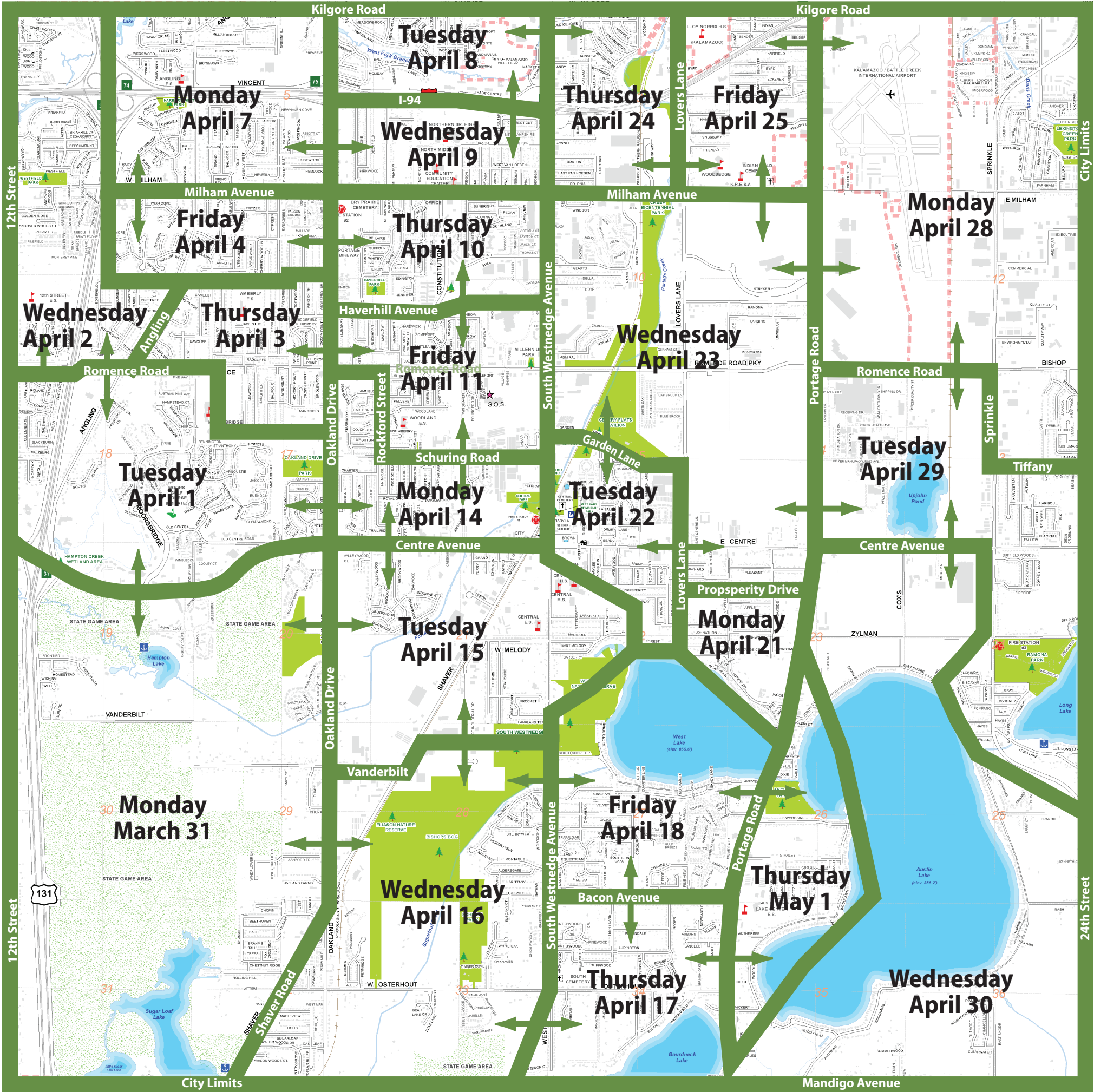
What Items WILL Be Collected?

- » Bed springs and mattresses.
- » Metal – **PILE SEPARATELY**
- » Appliances, including washers, dryers, stoves, and hot water heaters
- » Toilets
- » Lawn and yard equipment – **DRAIN FUEL/OIL**
- » Carpet – **ROLL UP IN LENGTHS OF SIX FEET OR LESS AND LESS THAN 50 POUNDS**
- » Other household items - **BUNDLE, BAG OR BOX IN PARCELS LESS THAN 50 POUNDS**

What Items WILL NOT Be Collected?

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| » Animal waste                    | » TV’s, computers & monitors   |
| » Brush or leaves (see next page) | » Tires  |
| » Wood fences or decking          | » Sand, gravel or sod  |
| » Household garbage               | » Broken concrete  |
| » Gas or fuel containers          | » Scrap building materials from demolition, construction or remodeling |
| » Large auto parts                | » Refrigerators, air conditioners and dehumidifiers                    |
| » Paint and chemicals             |  |
| » Railroad ties/landscape timbers |  |

It is the responsibility of Portage residents to dispose of the above materials properly. The City of Portage participates in the Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Program (see details on the next page). Residents are encouraged to call the HHW Hot Line at 373-5211 for information regarding hazardous waste drop-off disposal or visit [kalcounty.com/hhw](http://kalcounty.com/hhw).





# Brush & Bagged Leaf Collection: May 5 - 30

Brush and bagged leaves, including ornamental grasses, will be collected in May as part of the Curbside Brush Collection program. The map below indicates the week that materials will be collected. All materials should be at the curb no later than 7 AM prior to your designated Monday. Residents are reminded that **materials may not be collected on Monday; however, each zone will be cleared of materials by the end of the designated week.** Visit [portagemi.gov/280](http://portagemi.gov/280) for complete program details.

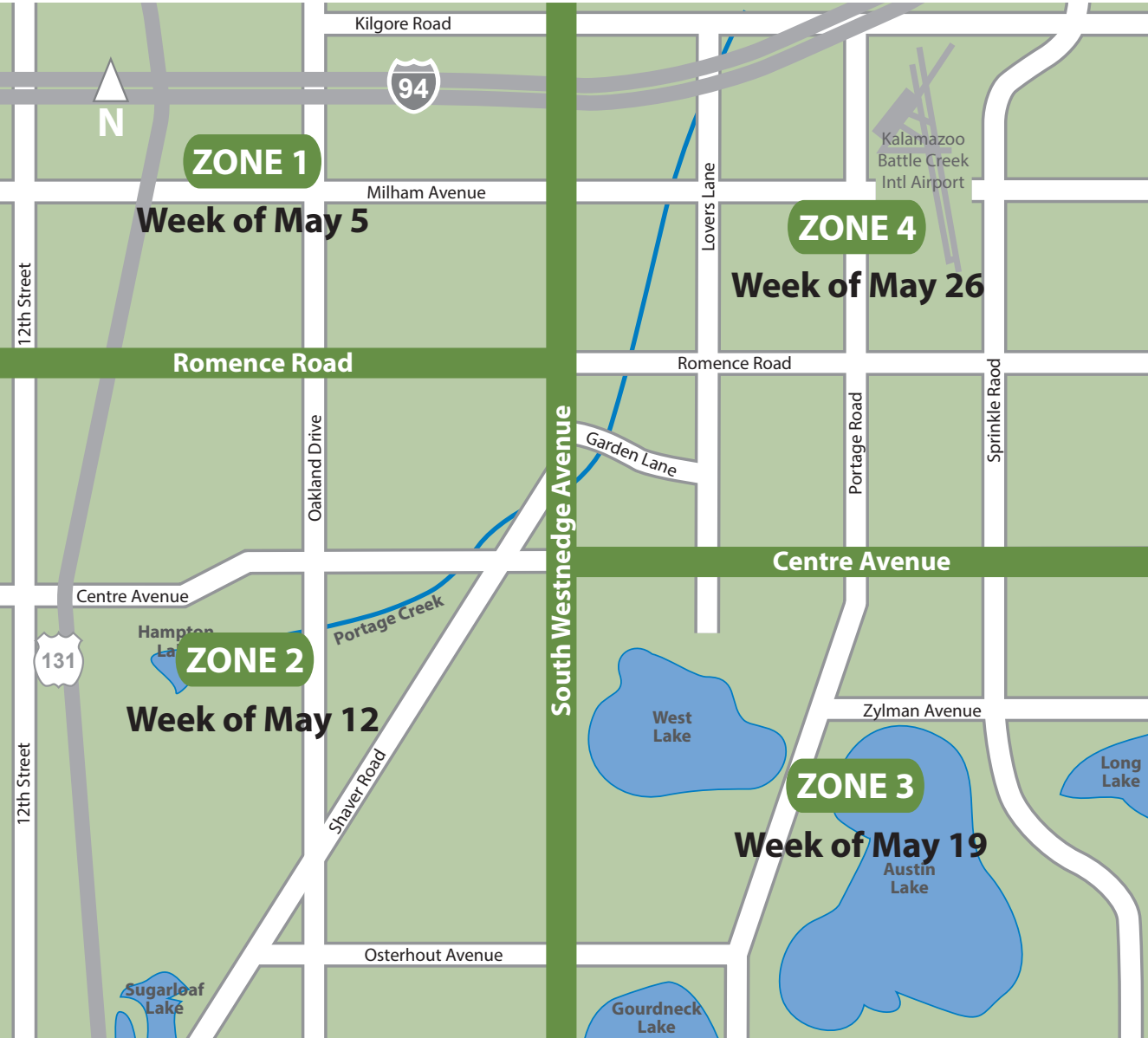


## How Should I Prepare My Brush/Leaves?

- » Branches 4 feet in length or longer are preferred
- » Branches must be less than 3 inches in diameter
- » Stack in neat piles at curbside
- » Do not cut up Christmas trees
- » Place leaves/ornamental grasses in biodegradable paper bags

## What Will NOT Be Collected?

- » Brush and branches generated from removal of a tree by a professional service
- » Grass clippings, flowers, weeds, garden materials
- » Firewood
- » Lumber, timbers, building materials, railroad ties, landscape materials
- » Roots or tree stumps
- » Loose leaves OR leaves bagged in plastic bags



# Leaves must be in biodegradable paper bags for the Bagged Leaf Curbside Collection

Leaves in plastic bags will not be collected!

Plastic bags, including decomposing plastic bags, are not permitted for the Bagged Leaf Collection in the City of Portage. Only biodegradable paper bags are allowed, as they naturally break down with exposure to the elements, enabling the complete recycling of both the bag and the leaves inside.



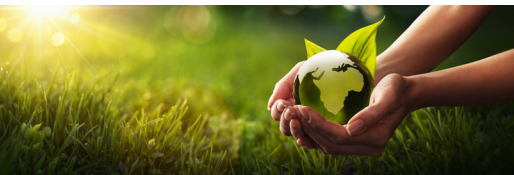
## Why biodegradable paper bags?

- » Composting requires air and moisture, which plastic bags prevent.
- » Federal law prohibits disposing of recyclable yard waste, including leaves in plastic bags, in landfills.
- » Paper bags are sturdy, self-standing, and designed to hold both dry and moist leaves while reducing the risk of tearing.

Please keep each bag under 50 pounds. Biodegradable paper bags are available at most grocery stores, home improvement centers, nurseries, and hardware stores in the lawn and garden section, as well as online.

## Leaf Drop-off Day

The City of Portage Compost Facility will be open on **Saturday, May 31 from 9 AM to 1 PM.** Portage residents may drop off leaves bagged in biodegradable paper yard waste bags and loose brush. The compost facility is located at 10905 Oakland Drive, just south of West Osterhout Avenue. Please be prepared to show proof of Portage residency (driver's license).



## Curbside Recycling Program

The City of Portage is committed to the conservation of natural resources and minimizing the strain on the planet. Through a dedicated, voter-approved millage, the Curbside Recycling Program provides for the bi-weekly collection of recyclable materials at the curbside.

Visit [portagemi.gov/284](http://portagemi.gov/284) to:

- » **Register** to participate in the Curbside Recycling Program
- » **Select a cart size** - 96 or 64 Gallons
- » **View the Curbside Recycling Guide** to learn what items are accepted and instructions on how to prepare the materials.
- » **Watch Recycling in Portage**, a video that explains the automated recycling collection process in Portage.

## Single-Stream Recycling

Simply place all of your **clean** recyclables in the cart together. Be mindful that depositing soiled materials into the cart can contaminate an entire load of clean recyclable items; compliance with these preparation instructions is essential to the success of the program.

## Bi-Weekly Collection

Recycling is collected every two weeks. The wheeled carts provide adequate space for two weeks' worth of recyclable materials, which means fewer trucks through your neighborhood. More importantly, the collection of materials once every two weeks results in a decrease in fuel consumption and emissions and the wear and tear on city streets.

## Cart Location

Wheel your cart to the street by 6 AM on your collection day. The cart is easy to maneuver to the curb and prevents recyclable materials from being blown around on windy days. Position the cart facing toward the street with a 3-foot clearance from other objects (other carts, mailbox, vehicle).

## Drop-Off Recycling @ Best Way Disposal

Portage residents may visit the Best Way Disposal drop-off facility for a fee of \$5 per cubic yard. All items included in the Curbside Recycling Program are accepted at the drop-off facility located at 2606 Miller Road in Kalamazoo, Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 4:30 PM and Saturdays, 8 AM - 12 PM.

## Questions?

**Best Way Disposal Customer Service Center:**  
(269) 388-3300  
**OR**  
**City of Portage Recycling Hotline:**  
(269) 329-4416

## Food Scraps Recycling Program

The City of Portage is partnering with My Green Michigan to offer a Food Scraps Recycling Pilot Program. The program, provided to Portage citizens at no additional fee, is tailored to turn food scraps into rich, nutrient-dense soil for the environment. Diverting food waste to composting has additional benefits, including reducing pollution and landfill waste, and lowering methane emissions. This pilot program is a part of the city's continuous efforts toward sustainability.

Portage citizens can easily recycle food scraps using a container at home, such as a lidded bowl, compostable bag, plastic container, countertop bin, or 5-gallon bucket. Simply visit one of the 10 convenient drop-off locations on your schedule and deposit your scraps into the 64-gallon lime green bins provided. My Green Michigan will empty the collection bins every other Tuesday.

Visit [portagemi.gov/933](http://portagemi.gov/933) for full program details, a list of acceptable materials, and the locations of all ten drop-off sites.



## Household Hazardous Waste Program

The City of Portage participates in the Kalamazoo County Government **Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Program.** This is a free service provided through Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services. For more information, including drop off location, hours of operation and accepted materials, call the Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste Program Information Hotline at 373-5211. Visit [kalcounty.com/hhw](http://kalcounty.com/hhw) to view the complete program details.

**PROTECT GROUNDWATER!**

Recycle used antifreeze, used motor oil and oil filters.

**For more information visit our website:**  
[kalcounty.com/hhw](http://kalcounty.com/hhw)  
or call 269-373-5211.



# YOUR BACKYARD IS BIGGER THAN YOU THINK

## Terra Talks: Shoreline Living

“Terra Talks” is a transformative and enlightening lecture series that delves into the heart of land management and explores the delicate balance between human activity and ecological preservation. Expert speakers will guide you through various topics such as the benefits of native planting, and strategic management of invasive species. After each program, books selected by speakers will be available for purchase.

- » Fridays (see below for dates), 6 - 7 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » FREE (Registration required)

**March 7 - Invasive Species Management** Speaker: Abigale Bristol, Invasive Plant Specialist

**March 14 - Evolution of a Naturalist: From Lawn Lover to Native Gardener** Speaker: Donna Keller, Audubon Society of Kalamazoo

**March 21 - Designing Native Plant Gardens: Minimizing the ‘Error’ in Trial and Error** Speaker: Mike Weis, Dropseed

**March 28 - Stewardship Strategies: Public Lands, Parks, and Private Parcels** Speaker: Jesse Lincoln, Michigan Natural Features Inventory

## Park Patrol Orientation

Join us at an annual meeting for returning volunteers and newcomers to connect with other Park Patrol volunteers and Portage Parks & Recreation staff. Establish meaningful points of contact to address concerns, learn effective ways to report maintenance issues to city staff, and be a proactive force in your community. Returning Park Patrol volunteers will be honored with badges, acknowledging their dedication and service to the community. Snacks and coffee will be provided.

- » Saturday, March 22, 10 - 11 AM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » FREE (Registration required by March 21)

## Nature Hike: Whispers of Spring

Shake off the winter blues and welcome spring with a refreshing hike at West Lake Nature Preserve! Explore subtle signs of the season, discover how plants and animals adapt to Michigan’s winter, and enjoy a one-to-two-mile adventure. Wear weather-appropriate clothing and closed-toed shoes.

- » Saturday, March 22, 2 - 3 PM
- » West Lake Nature Preserve (9001 South Westnedge Avenue)
- » FREE (Registration required by March 21)

## 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 [mypark.portagemi.gov](http://mypark.portagemi.gov) and click

REGISTER NOW!

## Dance Classes

Explore the joy of movement with our line-up of dance classes from dance instructor, Debra Snell.

### Line Dancing – Level 1: Beginner

Learn the latest country line dances. Start with basic steps and progress to popular routines. No partner is necessary.

- » Thursdays, April 3 - May 15, 6:50 - 7:50 PM
- » Schrier Park (850 West Osterhout Avenue)
- » \$50 per participant (Registration required by April 2)

### Line Dancing – Level 2: Easy - Intermediate

Start with basic country line dance steps and progress to popular routines. Participation in Beginning Line Dancing Level 1, or equivalent dance experience (as determined by the instructor) is recommended. No partner is necessary.

- » Thursdays, April 3 - May 15, 5:45 - 6:45 PM
- » Schrier Park (850 West Osterhout Avenue)
- » \$50 per participant (Registration required by April 2)

### Social Dancing for Couples

Learn to dance with your partner, in a variety of dance forms and techniques, designed to help you build confidence on the dance floor.

- » Thursdays, April 3 - May 15, 8 - 9 PM
- » Schrier Park (850 West Osterhout Avenue)
- » \$150 per couple (Registration required by April 2)

## Earn-A-Bike Workshop with OPEN ROADS

Ready to learn the basics of bike maintenance and repair? Join the Earn-A-Bike workshop. Over five weeks, participants will work on repairing a bike under the guidance of skilled cyclists from Open Roads. Learn the ABCs of bicycle care, maintenance, and repair in a hands-on environment. Bikes are provided by Portage Parks & Recreation, and at the end of the program, participants take home the bike they repaired. This program is designed for adults.

- » Tuesdays, April 8 - May 6, 5 - 7 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$50 per participant (Registration required by April 7)



## Softball

Join our adult slow-pitch softball league, where the thrill of the game meets with community camaraderie. We offer co-ed teams on Mondays and Tuesdays, and men’s teams on Wednesdays and Thursdays, providing a fantastic opportunity for players of all skill levels to enjoy

friendly competition in a welcoming and inclusive environment. Experience the fun of softball in the heart of our city.

- » April 21 - June 16
- » South Westnedge Park (9010 South Westnedge Avenue)
- » Visit [CityBallSports.com](http://CityBallSports.com) for pricing and registration

## City Seeking Vendors

### Farmers Market Applications Now Open

The Portage Farmers Market is now accepting vendor applications for its 2025 season. If you’re a farmer, a local specialty food producer, or an artisan entrepreneur, the market is a great opportunity to connect with 30,000 customers who are eager to shop local and support small businesses. The 2025 season will run on Sundays, May 4 to October 12, from 9 AM to 1 PM at Portage City Hall.

### Friday at the Flats - Accepting Vendor Applications!

Help build a strong sense of community at the monthly Friday at the Flats (FATF). Applications are being accepted for an exciting new opportunity where community businesses, service providers, nonprofits, entertainers, crafters can engage with attendees at this season's FATF, a FREE family-friendly event at Celery Flats that is open to the public offering a place to enjoy live, local music, food trucks, and family and friends in a wonderful outdoor community atmosphere.

To learn more about these vendor opportunities, visit [portagemi.gov/643](http://portagemi.gov/643) or call 329-4421.

## Portage Community Art Award Call to Artists

The City of Portage is sponsoring the 8th Annual Portage Community Art Award as part of the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts’ (KIA) West Michigan Area Show (WMAS) – a juried exhibition showcasing artists from a 14-county region. Submissions may include paintings, prints, photos, ceramics, sculpture, mixed media, and more. A \$1,000 award will be given to a Portage resident whose artwork reflects the city’s theme, *A Natural Place to Move*. The winning piece will be displayed in Portage City Hall for one year, beginning September 12, 2025, alongside a 12- to 20-piece exhibition from September 12 to November 7, 2025. The artist must also attend an unveiling event on September 11, 2025.

Artists can submit entries through April 20, 2025, following guidelines at [kiarts.org](http://kiarts.org). WMAS award winners will be announced on June 12, and the exhibition runs through September 14, 2025 at the KIA. For details, contact Portage Parks & Recreation at 329-4522.

# YOU HAVE MORE FRIENDS THAN YOU KNOW

## Memory Café

The Memory Café offers a welcoming space for individuals with memory loss and their care partners to connect, socialize, and engage in activities that support cognitive function. Enjoy arts and crafts, music, games, and storytelling in a supportive environment. Offered in partnership with the Memory Care Learning Center, the program is led by trained staff and volunteers. Space is limited.

- » Wednesdays, March 12, April 9, 10 – 11:30 AM
- » FREE and open to the public (Registration required)

## Michigan Secretary of State Mobile Office

The Secretary of State Mobile Office is coming back to the Portage Zhang Senior Center! Get your State ID, handle driver and vehicle services, renew license plates, or register to vote – all in one convenient stop. Schedule an appointment for a quick, hassle-free visit!

- » Thursday, March 20, 10 AM – 3 PM
- » FREE - SOS fees apply (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) | 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.

## Art in Action

Unleash your creativity and explore new artistic horizons in this special six-week art series! Whether you're an experienced artist or just beginning your journey, this program offers a chance to experiment with different mediums, learn from talented instructors, and connect with fellow art enthusiasts in a supportive and inspiring environment. Class schedules and details will be sent to registrants two weeks before the start. Space is limited!

**Weeks 1-4:** Learn from a visiting art instructor, explore different styles and techniques, and develop your artistic skills.

**Week 5:** Take a minibus trip to the Raclin Murphy Museum of Art at Notre Dame for a guided tour filled with inspiration.

**Week 6:** Showcase your work at an open-house art show with refreshments and a community celebration.

- » Wednesdays, March 26 - April 30, See class schedule for times
- » \$100 Members / \$110 Non-Members\*

\*Scholarships are available; please inquire upon registration.

## PZSC “Bits of Business” Expo

Join us for a celebration of vibrant mature lifestyles at the PZSC! Connect with over 65 local organizations and businesses offering valuable resources on staying active, volunteering, housing, transportation, caregiver support, and independent living. Enjoy easy access with our shuttle service from nearby parking lots from 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM.

**Interested in exhibiting?** Contact Kimberly Middleton, Deputy Director, at 324-4554.

Special thanks to Senior Living Advocates and Visiting Angels SWMI for sponsoring this event!



- » Friday, April 25, 9 AM – 1 PM
- » FREE and open to public (No registration required)





MARCH 2025

# PORTAGER

## Election Day Precinct Updates

Exciting changes are coming to voting locations in Portage! Affected voters will receive new Voter ID Cards in the mail soon.

- » **Precinct 2 Polling Location Change** – The Calvary Chapel of Kalamazoo Valley Church (formerly Perry Harley Davidson) has been approved as the new polling place for Precinct 2. Voters who previously cast ballots at Golden Tree Apartments Office will now vote at 5331 South Sprinkle Road.
- » **Precinct Consolidations** – Following Michigan’s Public Act 226 of 2023, precinct boundaries have been adjusted due to increased Early and Absentee Voting. Some precincts have been combined, reducing Election Day polling sites and saving city resources.

For affected voters, new Voter ID Cards will arrive by early March. Please review yours carefully, as your precinct number or polling location may have changed.

For a precinct map, visit [portagemi.gov/233](http://portagemi.gov/233). To check your voter record, go to [michigan.gov/vote](http://michigan.gov/vote).

## Discounted Water Rates for Seniors



Customers aged 65 and older who receive a water bill from the City of Portage may qualify for a 10% discount on water commodity and base quarterly charges. This discount applies only to the customer’s primary residence where they are billed directly.

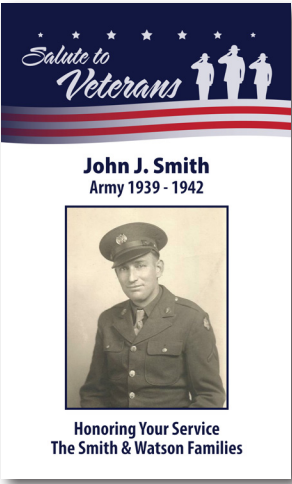
Applications are available at the Treasury Office in Portage City Hall, the Portage Zhang Senior Center, or online at [portagemi.gov/194](http://portagemi.gov/194). Questions? Call 329-4455.



Honor the service and sacrifice of a veteran or active-duty military member with a personalized light-pole banner in Liberty Park. For \$200, you can sponsor a banner featuring your hero’s photo, proudly displayed from Memorial Day to Labor Day 2025. At the end of the season, the banner is yours to keep as a lasting tribute to their dedication and bravery.

Proceeds from this program will directly support veterans services at the Portage Zhang Senior Center, helping to provide valuable resources to those who have served.

*Hurry!* Only 25 banners are available, and reservations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Don’t miss this special opportunity! Claim your banner and submit your veteran’s photo by April 30, 2025, at [portagemi.gov/170](http://portagemi.gov/170).



## Board of Review Reminder

The City of Portage Board of Review hears property tax valuation appeals from property owners. The board may address property valuation (SEV), assessment roll classification changes, and Property Tax Poverty Exemption requests. The 2025 Annual Assessment Change Notices were mailed the week of February 17, 2025. These notices include:

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

If you did not receive your notice, contact the Office of the City Assessor.

For 2025, taxable values may increase by up to 3.1%, based on the Inflation Rate Multiplier (IRM). Changes beyond this limit occur due to new construction, property transfers, or omitted property. Property sales prices are considered but do not solely determine assessed value.

If you believe your property valuation is inaccurate, you may appeal to the Board of Review. The Board will meet with property owners Monday, March 10 through Thursday, March 13. Schedule an appointment by calling 329-4433.

Written appeals can be submitted by 5:30 PM on Wednesday, March 12, 2025 and must include a completed Form L-4035: Petition to the Board of Review (available at [portagemi.gov/156](http://portagemi.gov/156)) and supporting documentation. Submit written appeals via mail, email ([assessingdept@portagemi.gov](mailto:assessingdept@portagemi.gov)), in-person drop-off, or the City Hall 24-hour drop box.

Please call the Office of the City Assessor at 329-4433 with questions.

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

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# YOUR BACKYARD IS BIGGER THAN YOU THINK

## Look inside for the 2025 Spring & Summer Parks & Recreation Guide

## 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.

## 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](http://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](http://portagemi.gov/205).

### MARCH 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 Portage Creek along the Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Trail.

PORTAGER Editor  
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