

PORTAGER

A Natural Place to Move



A Message from Mayor Patricia M. Randall

Is there anything more liberating than losing the training wheels and balancing – almost soaring – as a kid on a bike? Biking offers a faster mode of transport, somewhere between walking and driving, and comprises one-quarter of our city logo.

May celebrates National Bike Month in communities from coast to coast, established in 1956 by the League of American Bicyclists to highlight the benefits of cycling and to encourage more people to give it a try in. Portage also participates in Kalamazoo Area Bike Week May 10 - 17, sponsored by local bike enthusiasts. Join Kalamazoo Mayor David Anderson and me for the Mayor’s Ride on Saturday, May 10 at 10 AM starting at the Eliason Nature Reserve Pavilion (1614 Osterhout Avenue).



Over the past decade we have installed bike racks at City Hall, in our parks, and along our trails. We also offer bike repair stations at the Celery Flats, Eliason Nature Reserve, and the Portage Zhang Senior Center, with future stations planned at Lakeview and Lexington Green parks as part of ongoing park improvement projects.

Whether you ride for fun, fitness, errands, or to commute to work, you are part of a greater, growing movement to promote safer streets and connect communities, a healthier planet, and an active lifestyle. Portage has a long history of embracing biking. Our first trails were installed in 1981, encouraged by a young city engineer who had a passion for biking, well before “placemaking” trails became popular in other communities. His vision ignited a priority for growing our extensive trail system which covers over 26 miles today. This month we are cutting the ribbon on a new one-mile segment of trail from Lovers Lane to Portage Road along the Consumers Energy powerline.

In addition to our trail system Portage offers 45 miles of bike lanes. Our “Complete Streets” policy, adopted in 2015, mandates the installation of bike lanes and sidewalks when reconstructing a major road, if space allows, providing safer modes of transportation for motorists, bikers and walkers. In 2016, the Portage City Council adopted an ordinance requiring motorists to provide a minimum distance of five feet when overtaking and passing a cyclist. The five feet of space prevents a catastrophe, should a biker fall into the roadway.

As the youth in our community rediscover the benefits of speedier travel, we will see more little ones on the road. One needs to look no farther than the crowded bike racks in front of our schools to recognize the popularity. As a road cyclist, thank you in advance for giving bikers – young and old – a brake plus five feet this season. Whether or not you bike today, recall that magical moment when you first pedaled in all its glory.

Happy Spring!

– Patricia M. Randall

May is National Bike Month!

The City of Portage is proud to participate in National Bike Month, organized by the League of American Bicyclists. This annual celebration promotes the many benefits of biking and encourages everyone to get out and ride.



THE LEAGUE
OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS
since 1880

Mark Your Calendar!

- » Kalamazoo Area Bike Week: May 10 - 17
- » Mayor’s Ride: Saturday, May 10
- » Bike to Work Week: May 12 - 18
- » Bike to Work Day: Friday, May 16

With over 100,000 users each summer, the Portage trail system continues to grow in popularity. The city boasts 26 miles of off-road trails and 45 miles of dedicated bicycle lanes, making Portage an ideal place to walk, run, and ride. In the coming years, three more miles of off-road trails will be added, connecting more neighborhoods to key destinations throughout the city.

As trail use increases, so does the need for good trail etiquette. Please follow these guidelines to keep our trails safe and enjoyable for everyone:

- » Stay to the right unless passing.
- » Keep children close and to the right side of the trail.
- » Walk no more than two abreast to allow others to pass.
- » Pets must be leashed (six feet maximum).
- » Ensure children can control their bike and ride on one side.

- » When passing, call out “passing on your left” and give users time to move.
- » Cyclists should slow down when approaching groups and pass on the left when safe.
- » In-line skaters should shorten their stride when passing slower users.
- » Move off the trail when stopping to keep the path clear.
- » Stay on the designated trail – adjacent land is often private property.
- » Remember: In the City of Portage, drivers must give cyclists five feet of clearance when passing.

For updates on bike-related events, bicycle safety laws, and information about the **BIKEPORTAGE** rental program on the Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Trail, visit the Portage Parks & Recreation website at [mypark.portagemi.gov](https://www.mypark.portagemi.gov).

Healthy Neighborhoods Create Great Communities

Be a Neighborhood Steward

Strong, connected neighborhoods are the foundation of every great community. While many factors contribute to a high quality of life, everyday actions by residents play a big role in keeping neighborhoods clean, safe, and welcoming. Your efforts make Portage a better place to live, work, and play.



Here are a few simple ways to help maintain and improve your neighborhood:

- » **Maintain lawns and swimming pools.** One of the most frequent complaints the city receives in the summer regards lawn maintenance. The City of Portage Code of Ordinances says that lawns are required to be less than eight (8) inches long. This helps promote a sense of neighborhood community by maintaining lawns – and swimming pools – in accordance with city regulations and health standards.
- » **Remove or properly store trash and debris.** City staff regularly investigates complaints regarding the outdoor storage of refuse and trash. Please ensure that all such items are properly disposed of in an approved trash receptacle.
- » **Assist elderly or disabled neighbors** with tasks that may prove challenging for them, like gutter cleaning, leaf raking or moving garbage containers to and from the street. City ordinances do not permit garbage containers to be stored at the street.
- » **Perform regular upkeep.** Maintain painted building surfaces such as walls, windows, and trim, repair siding and roofing and clean siding and rain gutters. The City of Portage has an

outstanding Housing Rehabilitation Program that supports repairs for owner-occupied homes, promoting pride and responsible homeownership. Contact the Department of Community Development for more information regarding housing assistance programs.

- » **Observe local regulations, including building and zoning codes.** Do you have an idea for a summer project? Check with the Department of Community Development to determine if a permit is required for your project. Staff are available to help residents bring concepts to reality.
- » **Remove inoperable vehicles or store them in a garage.** Park all other vehicles on an improved driveway surface. The third most common complaint received during the summer months concerns parking and inoperable vehicles. If you have questions on where a vehicle may be parked or stored, or are interested in expanding your existing driveway, check with the Department of Community Development.
- » **Do not block driveways, mailboxes or sidewalks** with motor vehicles, RVs, boats or landscaping equipment.
- » **Keep pets on a leash** or confined to secured yard areas. Clean up after pets and curtail excessive dog barking.
- » **Avoid playing loud music or operating power tools** during early morning (before 7 AM) or late-night (after 10 PM) hours.

To support a safe and attractive community, the city of Portage has adopted local codes for property maintenance, housing, and neighborhood quality. In 2024, the city updated these standards by adopting the International Property Maintenance Code – a widely recognized benchmark for property upkeep.

If you notice a neighborhood issue or concern, visit [reportit.portagemi.gov](https://www.reportit.portagemi.gov) or call the Department of Community Development at 329-4477.

Thriving neighborhoods are built on everyday actions. Be a neighborhood steward – your example can inspire positive change and strengthen the entire community.



2024 Drinking Water Quality Report

The City of Portage produces an Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for review by Portage Water System customers, pursuant to requirements of the Federal “Safe Drinking Water Act.” The City of Portage welcomes the opportunity to demonstrate the excellent level of water quality delivered to Portage residents and utility customers.

[View the 2024 Drinking Water Quality Report at waterqualityreport.portagemi.gov.](https://www.waterqualityreport.portagemi.gov)

To receive a paper copy of the report or for more information, call the Department of Transportation & Utilities at 329-4422.



Stay informed. Stay safe.

The May 7, 2024 tornado showed how quickly emergencies can happen – and how important it is to get timely information. PortageAlert is the city’s official emergency notification system. Sign up to receive urgent messages by text, email, or phone about severe weather, road closures, water advisories, and more.



Don’t wait for the next emergency. Sign up today at [portagemi.gov](https://www.portagemi.gov) - search **PortageAlert** or scan the QR code to the left.

Respecting the Rules

How Sign Placement Protects Our Community

The City of Portage is committed to maintaining the appearance of its neighborhoods, public spaces, and infrastructure. To prevent blight caused by unauthorized signs, the City enforces regulations to preserve the aesthetic and functionality of its streets. While businesses and residents have the right to display signs—residents may have one yard sign not exceeding six square feet—the placement of signs, not the content, is regulated. Posting signs in the public right-of-way, typically the strip between the curb and sidewalk, is prohibited.

Signs are also not allowed in medians, on park property, or roadways. Enforcement will focus on businesses placing signs at intersections and other public areas. Illegal signs may be confiscated, and repeat offenders may face fines or legal action under an updated ordinance.



Temporary signs in residential districts cannot be placed in the right of way and cannot exceed six square feet.



Temporary signs in commercial districts cannot be placed in the right of way and cannot exceed 40 square feet.

Regulations also prohibit attaching signs, notices, or advertisements to city-owned or private telecommunications equipment, light poles, traffic systems, or sign poles. These signs can damage infrastructure, distract drivers, and end up in gutters or storm drains. Tacks and staples also pose safety risks to utility workers.

Like graffiti or litter, sign blight creates a negative impression. Help maintain Portage’s reputation as a clean, welcoming community by avoiding illegal signage. Let’s work together to keep Portage litter free and ensure it remains *A Natural Place to Move!*

Learn more or apply for a sign permit at www.portagemi.gov/178. Report illegal signs at www.reportit.portagemi.gov.



POCKET PAY

Merchant Spotlight

This month’s featured merchant is Fiesta Burrito is a local, family-owned and operated restaurant proudly serving authentic Mexican cuisine in the City of Portage since 2016. Every dish is prepared with care using home-made recipes and only the freshest ingredients. Customer favorites include flavorful Burritos, Tacos, and Patillos. Weekly lunch specials are offered and be sure to check out the festive Cinco de Mayo deal this May!



Planning an event? Fiesta Burrito provides catering for weddings, birthdays, graduations, holiday parties, office lunches, support local school fundraisers and offer food truck service for special events. Call 329-2442 or email fiestaburritoportage@gmail.com to learn more.

Visit Fiesta Burrito at 3774 West Centre Avenue in the Woodbridge Shopping Village. Hours are Monday - Saturday, 11 AM – 8 PM and Sunday, 4 PM – 7 PM.

Learn more about the Portage Pocket Pay eGift card program at www.portagemi.gov/pocketpay.

Understanding the Portage Sewer System – And How You Can Help Prevent Backups

Did you know the City of Portage maintains over 250 miles of sanitary sewer lines beneath our streets, neighborhoods, and business districts? This underground network quietly and efficiently moves wastewater from homes and businesses to the Kalamazoo Water Reclamation Plant for treatment. While most residents never have to think about it, occasional sewer backups and blockages can cause costly damage and serious inconvenience. Here’s what every Portage property owner should know to help prevent backups – and protect themselves if one occurs.

How the Sewer System Works

The Portage sanitary sewer system is a gravity-fed system that collects wastewater from homes, businesses, and institutions and directs it to larger trunk lines. In some areas where gravity flow isn’t possible, pump stations help move wastewater through the system. Eventually, all wastewater is transported to the regional treatment facility operated by the City of Kalamazoo.

The City of Portage is responsible for maintaining public sewer mains, typically located under roadways or within utility easements. Property owners are responsible for the service lead (also called a lateral) that connects their building to the public main – including any part of that line located within the public right-of-way.

What Causes Sewer Blockages and Backups?

Most backups are preventable. Common causes include:

- » **Fats, oils, and grease:** These substances solidify in sewer

- lines and create blockages. Never pour grease down the drain.
- » **"Flushable" wipes:** Despite the label, these products do not break down like toilet paper and often cause clogs.
- » **Tree roots:** Roots can infiltrate small cracks in sewer lines and grow over time, obstructing flow.
- » **Foreign objects:** Items like paper towels, hygiene products, and toys are not meant for sewer systems.

Who Pays for Sewer Backup Damages?

Under Michigan Public Act 222 of 2001, a municipality is only liable for damages from a sewer backup if:

- » The backup was caused by a defect or failure in the public system.
- » The municipality knew (or should have known) about the defect.
- » The municipality failed to take reasonable steps to address the issue.

To make a claim under PA 222, residents must notify the city in writing within 45 days of discovering the damage.

Protect Your Home: Insurance & Prevention

Property owners may face significant costs from sewer backups. Fortunately, there are ways to minimize the risk:

- » **Check your insurance policy.** Many standard homeowners’ insurance policies do not automatically cover sewer backups. Ask your insurance provider about adding a sewer backup rider for additional protection.
- » **Install a backflow preventer.** A backwater valve or backflow preventer installed on your sewer service line can help prevent sewage from flowing back into your basement during a system backup. Consult a licensed

- plumber to see if this option is right for your home.
- » **Take precautions inside your home.** Despite our best efforts, basements and crawl space areas can still become flooded by sewer backups. Avoid storing high-value or moisture-sensitive items in these areas. Use pallets or other lifting systems to keep items off the floor and out of harm’s way should water levels rise.



Your Role in Keeping the System Flowing

Residents can help prevent backups and keep the sewer system operating smoothly by:

- » Disposing of fats, oils, and grease in the trash.
- » Only flushing toilet paper – never wipes, feminine hygiene products, or paper towels.
- » Scheduling regular inspections of private sewer leads, especially in older homes with clay or cast-iron pipes.
- » Planting trees and shrubs away from sewer lines.

If you ever experience a sewer backup, contact Veolia at 324-9235. A crew will be dispatched to investigate and determine if the issue lies within the public main or the private lead.

By understanding how the system works and taking a few preventative steps, you can help keep Portage’s sewer system flowing smoothly – and protect your property from unexpected disruptions.

Curbside Brush Collection Reminder

The Quarterly Brush Collection Program begins in Zone 1 on Monday, May 5 and includes pickup of brush and bagged leaves in each zone. Visit www.portagemi.gov/280 to view program details and find your collection date.

Zone	Collection Starts
Zone 1 (Northwest Quadrant)	Monday, May 5
Zone 2 (Southwest Quadrant)	Monday, May 12
Zone 3 (Southeast Quadrant)	Monday, May 19
Zone 4 (Northeast Quadrant)	Monday, May 26

Brush & Bagged Leaves Drop-Off Day

Saturday, May 31 | 9 AM - 1 PM

The Oakland Drive Compost Facility will be open on Saturday, May 31 from 9 AM to 1 PM. Portage residents with proof of residency (drivers license) may drop off brush and bagged leaves. The compost facility is located at 10905 Oakland Drive, just south of West Osterhout Avenue. Department of Public Works staff will be present to direct patrons to the proper location for placement of materials.

Enjoy Safe Outdoor Fires

As the weather warms up, it’s the perfect time to gather around a cozy outdoor fire with friends and family. Whether you’re roasting marshmallows or simply enjoying the warmth, outdoor fires can be a delightful experience. To ensure everyone’s safety and enjoyment, here are some important guidelines to follow:

- » Obtain a permit as outlined in Section 34-94 of the Portage Code of Ordinances and Section 307 of the 2015 International Fire Code (IFC). The Department of Public Safety – Fire Division conducts site inspections to ensure safety.
- » Permits are issued for a two-year period, allowing for hassle-free enjoyment of outdoor fires.
- » Commercially manufactured fire containers may be used without a permit. Just remember to keep outdoor fireplaces well-maintained, supervised, and at least 25 feet from structures.
- » Choose an approved fire pit location, ensuring it meets safety criteria for size (36 inches or less), location (25 feet away from any structure and property line), and non-combustible construction materials.

- » Recreational fires are permitted in various locations, including single-family dwellings, churches, and schools for special events.
- » Keep a responsible adult in charge of the fire until it is completely extinguished.
- » Keep fire piles small, no larger than three feet in diameter and two feet high.
- » Always have a garden hose connected to a water supply nearby.
- » Be mindful of wind speeds; fires are prohibited when winds exceed ten mph.
- » Wrap up your fires before midnight for everyone’s safety and comfort.
- » Fires are for recreational or cooking purposes only; avoid burning yard waste, construction materials or trash.
- » Remember, permit holders are responsible for compliance with regulations and addressing any concerns from neighbors.

By following these guidelines, we can ensure that everyone enjoys outdoor fires responsibly and safely. So, go ahead, gather ‘round, and make some memories by the fire!

YOUR BACKYARD IS BIGGER THAN YOU THINK

BIKEPORTAGE

Grab a bike and hit the trails with **BIKEPORTAGE**! Start your ride at the rental station on the Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Trail, just north of the Celery Flats Pavilion. Download the MOVATIC app from the Apple Store or Google Play, create an account, and follow the prompts to pay, unlock your bike, and ride. Return your bike to the station before the park closes. Visit portagemi.gov/794 for rental rates and more details!

Farmers Market Opening Day

The Portage Farmers Market is back again for its 10th season! Every Sunday, we invite you to discover the freshest locally produced food. With over 30 local vendors each week, you will find an incredible selection of fresh fruits and vegetables, cheese, meats, eggs, baked goods, flowers, handmade crafts, and unique gifts. From farmers to bakers, artisans, and crafters, there’s something for everyone! Stay connected and never miss an update – follow us on Facebook and Instagram @PortageMarketMI.

- » Sundays, May 4 - October 12, 9 AM - 1 PM
- » City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue)

Geo Mystery Tours: Weeks of Beaks

Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day, May 10, for a month-long journey learning about our feathered friends. Grab your compass or GPS and get ready – it’s geocaching time! Each week, registered participants will receive starting GPS coordinates and secret instructions via email. Visit each cache station to uncover clues and solve the mystery by the end of the month!

- » May 1 - 31
- » Portage Parks, Self Guided
- » FREE (Registration required)

Qigong

Baduanjin Qigong, a traditional Chinese exercise system, blends gentle movement, breathing, and meditation to promote flexibility, circulation, and mental clarity. Instructor, Tao Ping with the Chinese American Association of Greater Kalamazoo, will guide participants ages five and up through Qigong sessions, offering insights into the history and cultural significance of Qigong.



- » Tuesdays, May 6 - July 8, 9 - 9:50 AM
- » Ramona Park (8600 South Sprinkle Road)
- » Rain Location: Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$70 per participant (Registration required by May 5)

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 and click



REGISTER NOW!

Full Circle Farm Springtime Farm Tour



Learn about eco-friendly practices and sustainable farming on a walking tour of Full Circle Farm in Three Rivers. Feed farm animals, learn how to compost with worms, and tour the fields and greenhouses to see what happens on a farm in the springtime. Guests can also help the bees and other pollinators by planting flowers. This program is designed for participants ages 8 and up. Those under 18 years old must be accompanied by an adult.

- » Wednesday, May 14, 5:30 - 8 PM (Bus departs at 5:40 PM)
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$30 per participant (Registration required)

Ranger Hike: Conservation Quest

Celebrate Endangered Species Day with a walk through Bishop’s Bog. Learn about invasive species, removal and conservation efforts taking place in the area on this four-mile hike open to all ages. Wear weather appropriate clothing and close-toed shoes for a comfortable experience.

- » Friday, May 16, 5 - 7 PM
- » Bishop’s Bog Trail from South Westnedge Park Pavilion (9010 South Westnedge Avenue)
- » FREE (Registration required by May 15)

Adult Pickleball Clinics

Bring your own paddle; pickleballs will be provided. This clinic is open to adults 18 and over.

Adult Pickleball Beginner Clinic

- » Monday, May 19, 5:30 - 7 PM

Adult Pickleball Intermediate Clinic

- » Friday, May 23, 5:30 - 7 PM
- » Ramona Park (8600 South Sprinkle Road)
- » \$40 per participant (Registration required)

Yoga in the Park: Vinyasa Flow Yoga

Join us for a four-week yoga class in collaboration with Intentional Yoga. Bring your own yoga mat and wear comfortable exercise clothing. This session is suitable for all skill levels. Open to participants 14 and up.



- » Thursdays, May 22 - June 12, 10 - 11 AM
- » Central Park (7810 Shaver Road)
- » \$65 per participant (Registration required)

Friday at the Flats

Come join the fun at Celery Flats for a rousing evening of food, music, and community! Friday at the Flats – where great food, music, and community come together!

- » Friday, May 23, 5 - 8 PM
- » Celery Flats (7335 Garden Lane)
- » FREE (No registration required)



Arts & Crafts Market

Celebrate local artistry at the Portage Arts & Crafts Market during Friday at the Flats, featuring handmade creations from talented artists, makers, and crafters. Stroll through the Celery Flats Historical Area to browse a variety of unique products, including paintings, wood art, jewelry, fiber arts, bath and body products, candles, and more.

- » Friday, May 23, 5 - 8 PM
- » Celery Flats Historical Area (7335 Garden Lane)
- » FREE (No registration required)

Opening Day at Ramona Park Beach

8600 South Sprinkle Road, 1/2 mile south of Centre Avenue

Ramona Park Beach officially opens for the season on Friday, May 23! Get ready for sunny days, sandy toes, and lakefront fun all summer long. Whether you’re planning to swim, picnic, or just relax by the water, Ramona Park Beach is the perfect spot. Portage residents receive a free annual pass with proof of residency. We’re open from 10 AM to 8 PM over Memorial Day Weekend – Friday, May 23 through Monday, May 26 – and again from Friday, May 30 to Sunday, June 1. Regular daily hours kick off for the season on Friday, June 6. For full details on hours, admission, and amenities, visit portagemi.gov/958.

Artists Meeting Artists

Hosted by the Portage Cultural Arts Committee

The Portage area is home to hundreds of talented artists – let’s connect! Join this casual networking event to meet fellow visual, performing, and literary artists, explore new opportunities, and share ideas on how the City of Portage can support and grow the arts. Enjoy light refreshments, display your artwork, and take the stage for open mic performances and readings. Let’s collaborate to bring more art to our community! For more information, contact Portage Parks & Recreation at 329-4522.

- » Friday, May 30, 6 - 8:30 PM
- » Portage Parks and Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » FREE (No registration required)

YOU HAVE MORE FRIENDS THAN YOU KNOW

Memory Café

A memory café brings together individuals with memory loss and their care partners to socialize, share experiences, and engage in activities that promote cognitive function. The café provides a safe and supportive environment where participants can connect with others facing similar challenges. Activities may include arts and crafts, music and singing, games, and storytelling. The memory café aims to improve socialization, reduce isolation, and promote overall well-being for individuals with memory loss and their caregivers.

The program is in partnership with the Memory Care Learning Center and will be facilitated by Heather Renter, PhD, and volunteers.

- » Wednesday, May 14, 10 - 11:30 AM
- » FREE & Open to the Public (Registration required)

MEMORY CARE
LEARNING CENTER

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 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.

National Senior Health & Fitness Day!



Get ready for a day of fun, fitness, and community at NSHF Day! Older adults can explore wellness through fitness demos, free health screenings from local partners, and a social event to close out the day. It’s the perfect chance to stay active and connected.

- » Wednesday, May 28, 9 AM - 1 PM
- » FREE (Registration required)

PZSC Cars & Cocktails Fundraiser Car Show

Join us for the PZSC’s Cars & Cocktails Fundraising Car Show! Open to all car, truck, and motorcycle owners, this event features live music, two bars, and delicious food and drinks for purchase - all to support the annual Veterans Day Breakfast. Spectators parking is available on Brown Street, in the



overflow lot behind Dairy Queen, or at the First Reformed Church. Come out for a great time – and a great cause!

- » Friday, May 30, 4 - 7 PM
- » FREE & Open to the Public (No registration required)
- » Show vehicles must register at eventbrite.com (search PZSC Cars & Cocktails) or call 548-4052. The entry fee is a donation with proceeds benefiting the PZSC Veteran’s Group.

Men’s Only Grief Support Group

This six-week series is for men mourning the death of a spouse or significant other. Centrica Care Navigators is partnering with the PZSC to provide a comfortable and accepting environment where you’ll find support and meet other men making a similar journey. Led by Matthew Carl, a licensed grief support counselor, you’ll learn how to cope with grief and begin the process of healing in a small group setting.



- » Mondays, June 2 - July 7, 10:30 AM - 12 PM
- » FREE & Open to the Public (Registration required)

High-Speed Fiber Installation Continues

Throughout the year, internet providers will continue installing high-speed fiber optic cables across the city. To notify residents of upcoming work, providers will distribute mailers, door hangers, and place yard signs in affected areas.

Before any digging begins, contractors are legally required to mark the locations of existing underground utilities. Colored utility flags or paint markings will be placed in your yard or right-of-way during this process. Please do not remove these markers – they are essential for protecting critical infrastructure. Work typically begins within a week of utility locating, and once installation is complete, crews will remove the markers and restore any disturbed landscaping.

If you have questions or concerns during this process, please contact the internet provider identified in the mailer or door hanger you received. You can also reach out directly to:

Metronet: 877-407-3224 | AT&T: 800-843-6581 | Comcast/Xfinity: 855-837-6991

Although the installation of the fiber within the right-of-way is not optional, there is no obligation for residents to sign up for the fiber internet service.

Portage Road 360 – Shaping the Portage Road Corridor

The Portage Road 360 planning process is moving forward. On Wednesday, April 16, the third community open house was held at the Portage Zhang Senior Center. Nearly 100 community members attended and helped finalize the vision and goals for the future of the Portage Road corridor.



Following the Community Report Presentation, attendees engaged in interactive activities, including selecting a preferred vision statement for the corridor and customizing design

features to reflect community needs and values.

In May, the planning team will continue meeting one-on-one with business owners along the corridor to ensure the final design is functional, accessible, and safe for all users. Portage Road 360 Community Open House #4 is scheduled for June 18 at 5:30 PM at the Portage Zhang Senior Center, where preliminary design concepts – shaped by public input – will be presented for community feedback.

New Arts and Culture Fund at Portage Zhang Senior Center Expands Creative Opportunities for Older Adults

The Portage Zhang Senior Center (PZSC) has announced the creation of the Bhadra Fulchand Shah, MD Arts and Culture Fund, a generous and meaningful gift established at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation (KZCF) by Dr. Shah's family. This new fund honors the life and legacy of Dr. Shah, a trailblazing physician and community leader whose love of the arts and dedication to service touched countless lives.

A pioneer in Kalamazoo's medical community, Dr. Shah was one of the first female physicians to practice in the area.

Known for her compassionate care and deep cultural curiosity, she also found joy and fulfillment in painting, music, and other artistic pursuits. Her family's gift ensures her values and passions will continue to enrich the lives of older adults for years to come.

The fund will directly support arts and culture programming at PZSC, opening doors for seniors to explore artistic expression, connect through shared experiences, and engage with diverse cultural opportunities—without financial barriers. Future uses of the fund may include scholarships, individual classes, and performances that contribute to the center's vibrant creative community.



Bhadra Fulchand Shah, MD

"We are incredibly grateful to Dr. Shah's family for this generous gift, which honors her legacy as both a healer and an advocate for the arts," said Kim Phillips, Director of the Portage Zhang Senior Center. "Her passion for creativity and community will now live on through the experiences of the seniors who benefit from this fund."

The Kalamazoo Community Foundation will oversee the fund to ensure it reflects Dr. Shah's vision and meets the evolving needs of the senior community. Additional contributions are welcome and will help sustain accessible arts programming for years to come.

To learn more or to donate, contact the Portage Zhang Senior Center at 329-4555 or visit mypzsc.portagemi.gov. You can also reach out to the Kalamazoo Community Foundation at kzcf.org.



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

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POSTAL CUSTOMER

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

Employee Training Day

» Tuesday, May 20
Closed 7:30 AM - 12 PM
Open 12 PM - 5:30 PM

Memorial Day

» Monday, May 26

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



Portage City Council

Portage City Council meetings are held twice a month on Tuesdays at 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



Chris Burns
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chris.burns@portagemi.gov



Vic Ledbetter
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Terry R. Urban
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Jihan Ain Young
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Patrick McGinnis, City Manager
(269) 329-4400
mcginnip@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.

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.

MAY 2025

1	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting
12	7:00 PM	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
13	6:00 PM	City Council Meeting
15	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting
27	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 Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Trail.

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