



# New Resident Guide to City Services



*portagemi.gov*





Dear New Portage Resident:

Welcome! On behalf of the City of Portage, we would like to extend a cordial greeting to you as a new member of our community. Portage residents have access to a variety of outstanding cultural, educational and recreational opportunities, and enjoy excellent roads, services and utilities. These qualities, along with one of the lowest property tax rates in Michigan, combine to make Portage ***A Natural Place to Move!*** We think you will agree.

Inside this New Resident Guide to City Services you will find information about city services and a directory of city departments. Also enclosed in the welcome package are other materials to help you and your family become familiar with Portage. For even more information, go to the city website at ***portagemi.gov***.

Once again, welcome to the City of Portage!

Sincerely,

Patrick McGinnis  
City Manager

Patricia M. Randall  
Mayor

# Government in Portage

Government in Portage serves residents in many ways – police and fire protection, water and sewer systems, street maintenance, cultural events, park and recreation activities, and much more. Portage city government plays a major role in daily life, but how is this accomplished? Who is responsible? How is the local government set up? Why is it important to know the answers to these questions? Informed citizens have a better understanding of how government works and can take advantage of opportunities available in the community, as well as play an active role in making the community a pleasant place to live. Government in Portage works for the people and through the people.

## Form of Government

The City of Portage operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The Mayor and City Council-members are the elected officials who preside over the city. The City Manager is appointed by the City Council to handle administrative duties in the city on a day-to-day basis. The City Manager makes recommendations to the City Council as a group and the Council acts on business at regularly scheduled meetings.

## City Council

The Portage City Council consists of a Mayor and six Councilmembers. Councilmembers are elected to four-year terms, staggered every two years (three Councilmembers elected every two years). The Mayor is elected every two years and is the presiding officer of the Council. The Council is responsible for adopting and amending city ordinances, determining city policies, and authorizing the annual city budget. The Council also determines the city tax millage and utility rates and approves contracts for the city.

The Council meets twice monthly (usually the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month) at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at Portage City Hall. Meetings are also broadcast live on cable access (Spectrum channel 995 and AT&T U-Verse channel 99) and via live streaming at [portagemi.gov/205](http://portagemi.gov/205). Meeting dates and agendas are published in the Portager newsletter and at [portagemi.gov/556](http://portagemi.gov/556). Meeting agendas can also be found at City Hall.

## The City Manager

The City Manager advises the Council and makes recommendations on matters related to the operation of the city. The City Manager is responsible for overseeing all departments and staff. The annual budget is prepared and presented to the City Council by the City Manager, as well as the Capital Improvement Program, which provides the city with direction for the future. The City Manager prepares the agenda for each City Council meeting and provides the City Council with all necessary documentation regarding each order of business.

## Citizen Participation

The City of Portage relies on citizen participation on Council Advisory Boards and Commissions. The advice received from these groups assists the Council and the City Administration in making Portage a better place to live. Citizens can provide the special talents and experience needed to meet the diversity of challenges facing the community today and in the future. If you are interested in becoming involved in city Boards and Commissions, a volunteer resume form is available at [www.portagemi.gov/151](http://www.portagemi.gov/151) or can be picked up at the Office of the City Clerk.

# City Services

City government is here to serve you, and the Portage City Administration is committed to making it as easy as possible for you to obtain the city services you need. The City of Portage curbside collection services include quarterly curbside brush collection, spring cleanup, fall leaf pickup and weekly curbside recycling. These programs are provided to single-family residential properties on public roadways only.

## Curbside Brush Collection

The City of Portage offers a brush collection program that includes the collection of loose brush during January, May, July, and October. The program also includes the collection of Christmas trees in January and bagged leaves/ornamental grasses in May. For collection purposes, the city is divided into four collection zones. Visit [portagemi.gov/280](http://portagemi.gov/280) to view complete program details, along with a printable map that indicates the week designated for pickup in your neighborhood.

## Spring Cleanup

Each spring, the City of Portage conducts the Spring Cleanup Program, giving residents the opportunity to reduce household clutter and dispose of unwanted materials by placing them along the street for collection. A detailed program guide is provided in the March edition of the Portager newsletter each year. You can also visit [portagemi.gov/283](http://portagemi.gov/283) for complete program details and to use the Address Locator Tool to determine the collection date for your neighborhood.

## Fall Leaf Pickup

Each fall, the City of Portage conducts the popular Fall Leaf Program, which includes three curbside collections of leaves. A detailed program guide is provided along with the September edition of

the Portager newsletter each year. You can also visit [portagemi.gov/282](http://portagemi.gov/282) to view complete program details and determine when the leaf collection will occur in your area by using the Address Locator Tool.

## Curbside Recycling Program

The City of Portage supports the goal to reduce and recycle waste by making it possible for residents to recycle at the curbside every two weeks or to drop material off at the Best Way Disposal drop-off facility. Locate our printable Curbside Recycling Guide at [portagemi.gov/284](http://portagemi.gov/284) which provides full details on this popular program. For more information, call the Best Way Disposal customer service center at 388-3300 or the City of Portage recycling hotline at 329-4416.

## Household Hazardous Waste

The City of Portage participates in the Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste 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, view the printable Household Hazardous Waste Guide at [portagemi.gov/287](http://portagemi.gov/287) or call the HHW Program Information Hotline at (269) 373-5211.

## Snow Removal

The City of Portage provides a comprehensive snow removal program each winter along 221 miles of city streets to meet the needs and safety of Portage drivers. As early as 3:30 AM, snowplow drivers are at work plowing, sanding, and salting city streets. Portage streets are prioritized for snowplowing according to how heavily the streets are traveled. For complete details regarding the city's snow removal plan, visit [portagemi.gov/290](http://portagemi.gov/290).

# Department Directory

7900 South Westnedge Avenue • Portage, MI 49002

City Offices are open from 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM, Monday through Thursday, and Friday from 8 AM - 12 PM.

Important Phone Numbers	Area Code (269)	Telephone
City Assessor (WCA) .....		329-4433
City Clerk .....		329-4511
City Manager .....		329-4400
Citizen Complaint Line .....		329-4404
Community Development .....		329-4477
Planning & Zoning .....		329-4477
Building Services Permits .....		329-4466
<b>Emergency .....</b>		<b>9-1-1</b>
Human Resources .....		329-4533
Finance .....		329-4534
Parks & Recreation - 320 Library Lane .....		329-4522
Public Safety		
Fire Division - 7830 Shaver Road .....		329-4487
Police Division - 7810 Shaver Road .....		329-4567
Public Information .....		329-9230
Public Works - 7719 South Westnedge Avenue .....		329-4444
Purchasing .....		324-9284
Recycling Hotline .....		329-4416
Senior Citizen Services - 203 East Centre Avenue .....		329-4555
Technology Services .....		324-9269
Transportation & Utilities - 7719 South Westnedge Avenue .....		329-4422
Treasury (Utility and Tax Billing and Payments) .....		329-4455
Water and Sewer Services (provided by Veolia) .....		324-9235

# Department Listing

## City Assessor (WCA)

Contact us for:

- ◆ Board of Review
- ◆ Change in Mailing Address
- ◆ Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) Requests and Rescinds
- ◆ Disabled Veterans Exemptions
- ◆ Parcel Combination Requests
- ◆ Poverty Exemptions
- ◆ Property Ownership Records
- ◆ Property Tax Estimates
- ◆ Property Transfer Affidavit Filing
- ◆ Real Property Information (land / building sizes, values, State Equalized Value, home sale prices)
- ◆ Special Assessment Rolls

**329-4433**



## City Clerk

Contact us for:

- ◆ Advisory Board & Commission Appointments
- ◆ Block Party Permits
- ◆ Cemetery Information
- ◆ City Council Correspondence
- ◆ City Council Agendas and Meeting Minutes
- ◆ City Ordinance Information
- ◆ Elections
  - ◆ Absentee Ballots
  - ◆ Voter Registration
- ◆ Liquor Licenses
- ◆ Marihuana Business Permits
- ◆ Records Requests (FOIA)
- ◆ Solicitor Permits

**329-4511**

## City Manager

Contact us for:

- ◆ City Administration
- ◆ City Hall Artwork Displays
- ◆ Customer Service Concerns
- ◆ If you are unsure of where to call...

**329-4400**

## Community Development

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*Contact us for:*

- ◆ Census Information
- ◆ Construction Permits and Inspections:
  - ◆ Building
  - ◆ Electrical
  - ◆ Mechanical
  - ◆ Plumbing
  - ◆ Sign
  - ◆ Soil Erosion
  - ◆ New Water / Sewer Installation
- ◆ Economic Development
- ◆ GIS Mapping
  - ◆ Aerial Imagery
  - ◆ Flood Zones/Maps
  - ◆ Property Information
- ◆ Housing Rehabilitation Programs (CBDG)
- ◆ Land Division / Lot Line Adjustments
- ◆ Planning and Zoning
- ◆ Strategic & Long-Term Plans
- ◆ Street Address Assignments
- ◆ Water / Sewer Availability
- ◆ Zoning & Building Code Requirements
  - ◆ Ordinance Enforcement

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**329-4477**

## Finance

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*Contact us for:*

- ◆ Accounts Payable
- ◆ City Budget Questions

**329-4534**

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## Treasury

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*Contact us for:*

- ◆ Auto Payment / Direct Debit Payment
- ◆ Dog License Renewals (December - February)
- ◆ Final Water Meter Reading
- ◆ Name Change on Utilities Account
- ◆ Paperless Billing
- ◆ Special Assessment Billing and Payments
- ◆ Tax Billing and Payments
- ◆ Water and Sewer Billing and Payments
- ◆ Water Service Turn On / Transfer

**329-4455**

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## Human Resources

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*Contact us for:*

- ◆ Employment Applications
- ◆ Professional Employment Opportunities
- ◆ Seasonal and Recreation Program Employment
- ◆ Volunteer Opportunities

**329-4533**

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## Parks & Recreation

Contact us for:

- ◆ Adopt-A-Park Program
- ◆ Arts Committee
- ◆ Bike Patrol Volunteer Programs
- ◆ Bike Rentals
- ◆ Bikeway System / Trail Facilities
- ◆ Facility Rentals
- ◆ Food Truck Permits
- ◆ Park Locations (see page 7) and Park Rules
  - ◆ Ramona Park Beach
  - ◆ Celery Flats Historical Area
  - ◆ The Ice Rink at Millennium Park
  - ◆ South Westnedge Skate Park
  - ◆ Portage Dog Park
- ◆ Park Shelter Reservations
- ◆ Portage Farmers Market
- ◆ Recreation Programs (including Softball & Pickleball Leagues)
- ◆ Special Events

**329-4522**

## Senior Citizen Services at the Portage Zhang Senior Center

Contact us for:

- ◆ Fitness Center
- ◆ Health & Fitness Classes
- ◆ Indoor Pickleball
- ◆ Information on Aging Issues
- ◆ Lifelong Learning Opportunities
- ◆ Membership Information
- ◆ Programs / Events
- ◆ Senior Flu Shots
- ◆ Support Groups
- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Trips and Special Events
- ◆ Volunteer Services
- ◆ Wellness Programs

**329-4555**



# Department of Public Safety



## Fire Division

*Contact us for:*

- ◆ Car Seat (Infant / Child) Program
- ◆ Emergency Medical Response
- ◆ Fire Code Information
- ◆ Fire Extinguisher Service Questions
- ◆ Fire Safety Presentations
- ◆ Fire Suppression
- ◆ Hazardous Material Response
- ◆ No Burning Ordinance
- ◆ Recreational Fire Permits
- ◆ Smoke Detector Installation Program

**EMERGENCY      9•1•1**

**Non-emergency Dispatch    488-8911**  
**Information            329-4487**

## Police Division

*Contact us for:*

- ◆ Alarm / Security Systems
- ◆ Crime Prevention
- ◆ Fingerprinting
- ◆ Gun Permits
- ◆ Neighborhood Watch Program Non-Emergency Calls
- ◆ Patrol and Detective Divisions Police or Accident Report Copies
- ◆ School Resource Officer Program
- ◆ Traffic Concerns

**EMERGENCY      9•1•1**  
**Non-emergency Dispatch    488-8911**  
**Information            329-4487**



## Public Information

Contact us for:

- ◆ Cable Access Programming
- ◆ Media Inquiries
- ◆ New Resident / Relocation Information
- ◆ Portager Newsletter
- ◆ Public Information (publications, tours)
- ◆ Website & Social Media

**324-9230**

## Public Works

Contact us for:

- ◆ Curbside Collection Programs
  - ◆ Brush Collection Program
  - ◆ Fall Leaf Pickup Program
  - ◆ Recycling Program
  - ◆ Spring Cleanup Program
- ◆ Household Hazardous Waste Disposal
- ◆ Park & Cemetery Maintenance
- ◆ Public Street Snow Plowing
- ◆ Road Repairs (potholes, flooding, signs)
- ◆ Road Hazards & Sidewalk Repairs
- ◆ Sign Issues (Traffic Control and Street Signs)
- ◆ Snow Plowing (on public streets)
- ◆ Street Tree Trimming / Removal / Replacement
- ◆ Trees or Limbs Fallen in the Roadway

**329-4444**

## Transportation & Utilities

Contact us for:

- ◆ Environmental Questions
- ◆ Motorist's Vision Obstructions
- ◆ Report a Streetlight Out / Request Streetlight
- ◆ Right-of-Way Permits
- ◆ Road Closings / Construction Zones
- ◆ Sewer and Water Connection Questions
- ◆ Sewer and Water Maintenance Questions
- ◆ Storm Basin Maintenance / Questions
- ◆ Traffic Signals
- ◆ Traffic Counts and Questions
- ◆ Utility Project Requests & Petitions
- ◆ Water / Sewer Construction Projects

**329-4422**

## Veolia (Water & Sewer Services)

Contact us for:

- ◆ High Water Usage Concerns
- ◆ Hydrant Flushing
- ◆ No Water / Low Water Pressure
- ◆ Rusty Water
- ◆ Street Sweeping Questions
- ◆ Water Service Repair Requests
- ◆ Water / Sewer Location - MISS Dig
- ◆ Water Main Breaks

**324-9235**

# Resources for New Residents

## Airport

**Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport**  
(269) 388-3668  
 [flyazoo.com](http://flyazoo.com)

## Animal Control

**Kalamazoo County Animal Services & Enforcement**  
(269) 383-8775  
 [kalcounty.com/ac](http://kalcounty.com/ac)

## Better Business Bureau

(800) 684-3222  
 [bbb.org/western-michigan](http://bbb.org/western-michigan)

## Business Consulting

**Southwest Michigan First**  
(269) 553-9588  
 [southwestmichiganfirst.com](http://southwestmichiganfirst.com)

## Cable TV

**Spectrum**  
(877) 906-9121  
 [spectrum.com](http://spectrum.com)

**AT&T U-Verse**  
(800) 288-2020  
 [att.com](http://att.com)

## Child Care Resources

**Great Start to Quality Southwest Resource Center**  
(877) 614-7328  
 [greatstarttoquality.org](http://greatstarttoquality.org)

**Southwest Child Care Resources**  
(269) 349-3296  
 [ccr4kids.org](http://ccr4kids.org)

## County Court

**Kalamazoo County 8th District**  
(269) 384-8171  
 [kalcounty.com/courts/district](http://kalcounty.com/courts/district)

## Garbage Service

**Best Way Disposal**  
(269) 388-3300  
 [bestway-disposal.com](http://bestway-disposal.com)

## Republic Services

(888) 249-5112  
 [republicservices.com](http://republicservices.com)

## Waste Management

(866) 909-4458  
 [wm.com](http://wm.com)

## Gas and Electric Service

**Consumers Energy**  
(for most Portage residents)  
(800) 477-5050  
 [consumersenergy.com](http://consumersenergy.com)

**Midwest Energy & Communications**  
(for a few Portage residents)  
(800) 492-5989  
 [teammidwest.com](http://teammidwest.com)

## Hospitals / Medical Assistance

### Medical Emergency Dial 9-1-1

**Ascension Borgess**  
(269) 226-7000  
 [borgess.com](http://borgess.com)

**Bronson Healthcare Group**  
(269) 341-7654  
 [bronsonhealth.com](http://bronsonhealth.com)

**Poison Control Center**  
800-222-1222  
 [poison.org](http://poison.org)

## Library

**Portage District Library**  
(269) 329-4544  
 [portagelibrary.info](http://portagelibrary.info)

## Post Office

**Portage Post Office**  
(269) 327-7441  
 [usps.com](http://usps.com)

## Public Schools

**Portage Public Schools**  
(for most Portage residents)  
(269) 323-5000  
 [portageps.org](http://portageps.org)

**Comstock Public Schools**  
(269) 250-8900  
 [comstockps.org](http://comstockps.org)

## Schoolcraft Community Schools

(269) 488-7350  
 [schoolcraftschools.org](http://schoolcraftschools.org)

## Vicksburg Community Schools

(269) 321-1000  
 [vicksburgschools.org](http://vicksburgschools.org)

## Public Transportation

**Kalamazoo Metro Transit**  
(269) 337-8222  
 [kmetro.org](http://kmetro.org)

## Indian Trails

(800) 292-3831  
 [indiantrails.com](http://indiantrails.com)

## Greyhound

(800) 231-2222  
 [greyhound.com](http://greyhound.com)

## Amtrak

1-800-872-7245  
 [amtrak.com](http://amtrak.com)

## Realtors

**Greater Kalamazoo Association of Realtors (GKAR)**  
(269) 382-1597  
 [gkar.com](http://gkar.com)

## Recycling Services

**Curbside Recycling**  
(269) 329-4416  
 [portagemi.gov/284](http://portagemi.gov/284)

**Household Hazardous Waste Center**  
(269) 373-5211  
 [kalcounty.com/hhw](http://kalcounty.com/hhw)

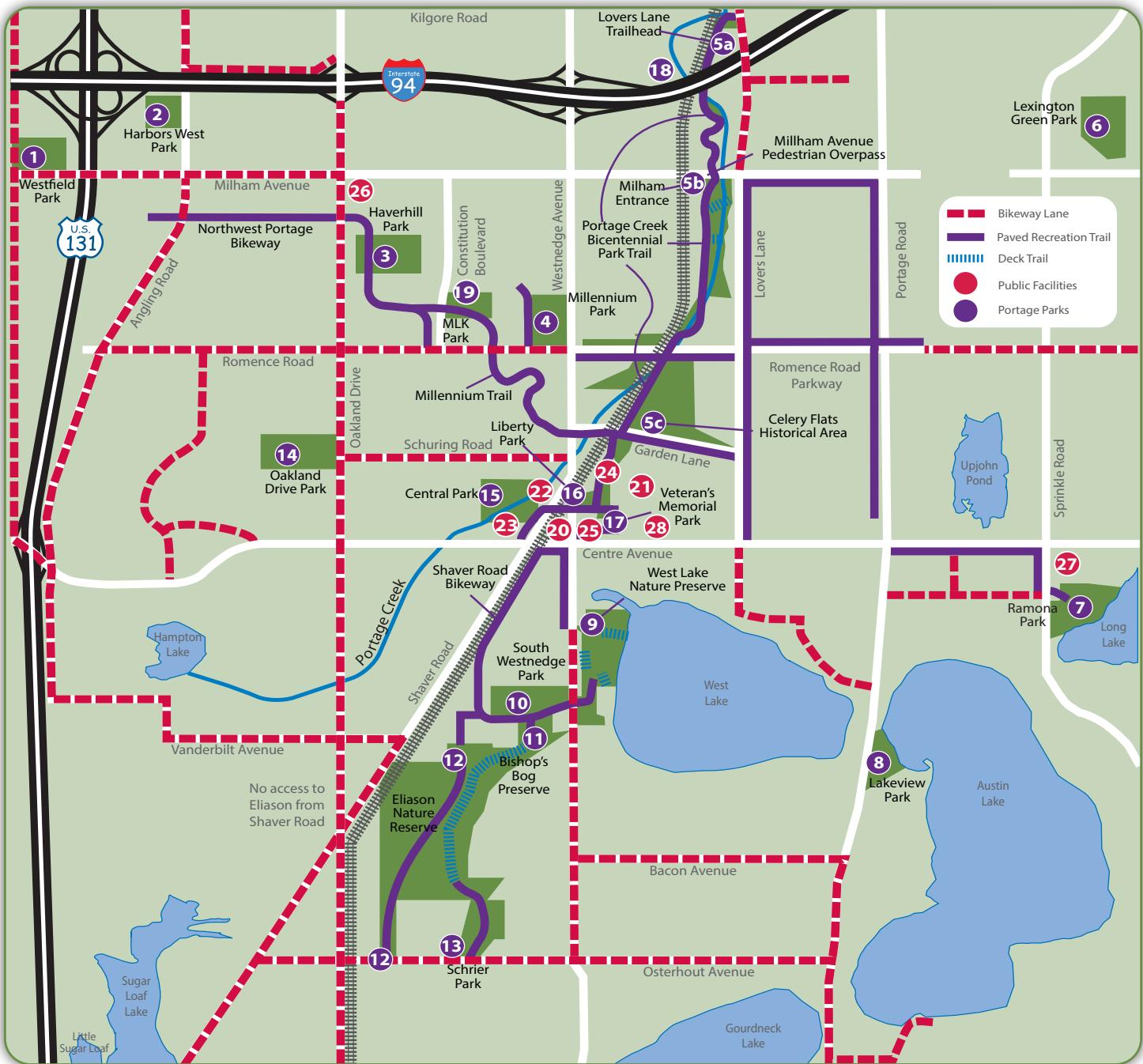
## Secretary of State

(888) 767-6424  
 [michigan.gov/sos](http://michigan.gov/sos)

## Water & Sewer Service

**City of Portage - Treasury Office**  
(269) 329-4455  
 [portagemi.gov](http://portagemi.gov)

# Public Facilities and Parks



- 1. Westfield Park
- 2. Harbors West Park
- 3. Haverhill Park
- 4. Millennium Park
- 5a. PCBP North Trail Head
- 5b. PCBP/Milham Entrance
- 5c. Celery Flats Historical Area
- 6. Lexington Green Park
- 7. Ramona Park
- 8. Lakeview Park
- 9. West Lake Nature Preserve
- 10. South Westnedge Park
- 11. Bishops Bog Preserve
- 12. Eliason Nature Reserve
- 13. Schrier Park
- 14. Oakland Drive Park
- 15. Central Park
- 16. Liberty Park
- 17. Veteran's Memorial Park
- 18. Betty Lee Ongley Nature Preserve
- 19. MLK Park
- 20. Portage City Hall
- 21. Portage District Library
- 22. Public Safety - Police
- 23. Public Safety - Fire Station #1
- 24. Public Works Building
- 25. Portage Zhang Senior Center
- 26. Public Safety - Fire Station #2
- 27. Public Safety - Fire Station #3
- 28. Portage Parks & Recreation

# City of Portage Profile

The City of Portage is rich with opportunities – a family-oriented area with a high quality of life, a strong economy, and outstanding educational choices for lifelong learning. Four public school districts offer education to Portage students – Portage Public Schools ([portageps.org](http://portageps.org)) for most families and in a few areas of the city, Vicksburg Community Schools ([vicksburgschools.org](http://vicksburgschools.org)), Schoolcraft Community Schools ([schoolcraftschools.org](http://schoolcraftschools.org)), and Comstock Public Schools ([comstockps.org](http://comstockps.org)). Portage has bountiful natural resources, including seven lakes, state game areas, significant open spaces, and wetlands. The community provides 19 parks, including four dedicated to nature preservation, and more than 57 miles of bikeways and multi-use trails, making the City of Portage *A Natural Place to Move!* Portage combines the convenience of an urban lifestyle with that of a close-knit, friendly community.

**Location:** Approximately mid-way between Chicago and Detroit along Interstate 94, Portage is within 300 miles of Cleveland, Indianapolis, and Milwaukee and 50 miles from Grand Rapids and South Bend.

**Population:** 48,846 (2020 US Census)

**Incorporated:** December 1963

**Area:** 35.2 square miles

**Motto:** *A Natural Place to Move!*

**History:** Long before the settlers arrived in the early 1800s, Potawatomi Indians inhabited the area. The Indians hunted, fished, grew corn, dwelt in conical-shaped wigwams, and greeted the early settlers in peace.

Settlers discovered the rich soil made a perfect growing environment for celery. By the 1880s, Portage had earned the distinction of being the "Celery City" of the nation. The area remained prolific in celery production until the middle of the twentieth century.

The City of Portage began its rapid transformation to its modern form during the post-World War II era. The first major employer, The Upjohn Company, opened a manufacturing plant here in 1948 to produce antibiotics and adrenal cortex drugs.

As a result of continued growth and prosperity, Portage was incorporated as a city in 1963.

Today, Portage remains a growing and thriving community, offering distinctive advantages in living, working, and learning that area residents and businesses have discovered make Portage *A Natural Place to Move!*

*Books and other materials on the complete history of Portage can be found at the Portage District Library. "This Place Called Portage: Its Past and Present" and a guidebook of the Portage Historic District are also available for purchase at the Treasury Office located within City Hall.*



# Customer Service Mission Statement

## Our Commitments:

**S**elfless: We will be attentive to customer requests, regardless of other priorities. We will demonstrate our abilities through our appearance, conduct, conversation, and results.

**E**thical: We will act with integrity and a sense of duty and obligation to our customers and will always be accountable for our actions.

**R**espectful: We will treat our customers as we wish to be treated and ensure that every interaction is conducted in a pleasant and professional manner.

**V**ersatile: We will be resourceful and capable of performing a variety of tasks in order to get the job done, regardless of our job description.

**I**nnovative: We will identify ways to continuously improve our processes and policies to meet the ever-changing needs of the community and our customers. We will welcome customer feedback as a means to improve the services we provide.

**C**ommunication: We will actively listen to our customers and respond in a clear and concise manner. We will communicate through available resources, providing accurate information in a manner that is easy to understand.

**E**ncouraging: We will support employee creativity and teamwork to promote an open and collaborative work environment that encourages employees to excel in every aspect of their job – including customer service.

# Award-Winning Community

Year after year, the City of Portage is recognized for excellence in areas such as public safety, innovative use of technology, financial planning and budgeting, public works projects, parks and recreation programs, public communications, and other areas of public service.

## Recent Awards and Recognition

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- ◆ American Institute of Architects (AIA) Design Awards - 2022 People's Choice Award and Merit Award – Charles & Lynn Zhang Portage Community Senior Center
- ◆ American Public Works Association Southwest Michigan
  - ◆ Project of the Year 2020, Transportation Project Greater Than \$3 Million – Zylman Avenue Reconstruction
  - ◆ Project of the Year 2022, Structures Greater Than \$1 Million – Charles & Lynn Zhang Portage Community Senior Center
  - ◆ Project of the Year 2022, Transportation Project less than \$1 Million - South Westnedge Avenue Microsurfacing and Sidewalk Upgrade Project
- ◆ American Public Works Association Michigan Project of the Year 2020, Transportation Project \$1 Million to \$5 Million – Zylman Avenue Reconstruction
- ◆ Arbor Day Foundation – Tree City USA
- ◆ Better Cities for Pets – 2021 Certification
- ◆ Bicycle Friendly Community – League of American Bicyclists, Silver Level
- ◆ Commission on Business for Law Enforcement Agencies – Bronze Level
- ◆ Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies – Continued Accreditation
- ◆ Communicator Awards – Two 2022 Awards of Excellence and one 2022 Award of Distinction
- ◆ Government Finance Officers Association Awards
  - ◆ Distinguished Budget Presentation
  - ◆ Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting
  - ◆ Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting
- ◆ Michigan Green Communities – Gold Level Certification
- ◆ National Institute of Senior Centers – Continued Accreditation
- ◆ National Weather Service – "StormReady" Community
- ◆ Planning Excellence Award for Urban Design 2022 – Lake Center District Corridor & Placemaking Study



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