



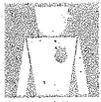
Vision Statement

As the City of Portage matures and experiences growth in the next 20 to 30 years, its public sector services must be flexible and adaptable to meet evolving needs.

Given the broad spectrum of challenges and problems that may arise, future city councils and city managers must respond by providing services with an emphasis on coordination and cooperation among area agencies.

Personnel must become more specialized in the areas of public safety services, senior services and education, as it will become impossible for any one municipality to maintain staff with expertise in all possible problems areas.

PUBLIC SERVICES



Situation Analysis

The public services utilized by the residents of the City of Portage and the Portage School District are financed primarily through taxes. These include, but are not limited to:

- Public safety of fire and police.
- Planning and development.
- Services to senior citizens.
- Education in the public schools.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Situation Analysis

Public safety occupations are becoming more complex, requiring more training, as technological, transportation, communication and cultural changes rapidly accelerate. The public expects public safety workers to have the ability to face changing problems and situations. Current training practices include formal, professional development plans and considerable cross-training. The educational prerequisites will continue to increase.

Leadership

Agency leadership sets the course for all public safety service agencies. Portage, as well as Kalamazoo County, are fortunate to have this leadership. The leadership is responsible for setting budgets and, therefore, determining current and future priorities and interacting with public officials and other public safety agencies. Recruiting, hiring and training personnel are additional leadership responsibilities. This depth of responsibility mandates strong leadership.

Sophisticated Equipment and Technology

The rapid trends in this area require an investment (within prudent fiscal restraints) in up-to-date equipment and technology. To that end some of the Portage fire trucks have computers on board, and the sheriff's department is experimenting with video equipment for detecting traffic violations.

Interagency Cooperation

Reasonably good coordination and cooperation exist among the five law enforcement county agencies, which are the City of Kalamazoo Public Safety, Kalamazoo Township Police Department, Portage Police and Fire Departments, Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department and Western Michigan University's Department of Public Safety.

The Portage and Upjohn Company Fire Departments are another example of good interagency cooperation. Efforts to continue and improve upon cooperation are essential.



Demographics of Crime

The geographic concentration of crime in Portage occurs along the Westnedge commercial corridor. The demographic concentration of criminals is primarily young people. These individuals suffer from drug/alcohol abuse, low education, low self-esteem and limited ethical sensibilities.

While police services can be targeted efficiently toward these geographic and demographic areas, such concentrated protection may result in fewer patrols for the neighborhoods.



Judicial and Penal Systems

The judicial/penal systems are severely constrained, at best, and failures, at worst. The Portage jail facilities need to be upgraded, and because of space limitations, the county jail requires that prisoners be released in overcrowding crises.

It takes considerable resources in terms of personnel time to transport offenders to the county jail from Portage. Tremendous levels of human and financial resources are spent on the judicial system, and sentences are inappropriately short.

Penal experts agree that rehabilitation has failed as a function of prison.

Socioeconomic and Demographic Changes

The forecasts that seem to most greatly impact the future demands of the public safety organizations are the dramatic socioeconomic and demographic changes to the population mix.

As Portage matures it will inherit the problems of a mature

city such as distressed and deteriorating neighborhoods and homelessness. Deteriorating neighborhoods tend to envelop crime and fires.

Schoolcraft and Vicksburg will grow more rapidly than Portage and may begin to border more closely.

The elderly will grow at the fastest rate becoming a larger share of the population and are likely to require more protective and emergency services.

Technology and Lifestyles

Technology and lifestyles will influence public safety provision. In the area of transportation, banning traffic from the central city and using people movers are a possible alternative that bring with it considerable safety and security implications for the outlying terminuses.

New building materials and/or housing structures will require that fire and other emergency personnel develop new expertise. The higher proportion of elderly may increase the number of multiple household dwellings and institutions. Concomitant

safety and fire risks will accompany this trend.

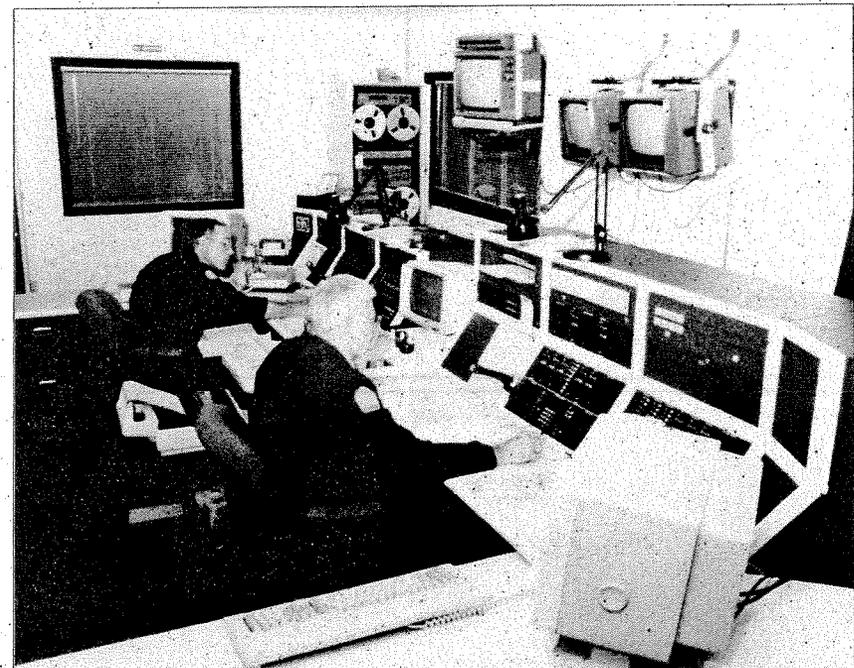
Similarly, the technology of public safety services will change. Even today, more helicopter/air vehicle emergency services are needed. Communications and computer technologies will drastically improve the capabilities of safety equipment.

The future brings new challenges to public safety and well-being. Computer-related crimes have been rising sharply and will

continue to increase.

As a growing city within a larger metropolitan area with heavily traveled interstate highways and a busy airport, Portage should expect a major air or hazardous material transport crisis sometime in the future.

With less attention given to the environment in past decades and a substantial manufacturing base, Portage could face major environmental crises in the future.





Strategic Direction

Given the magnitude of the future challenges, periodic, formal strategic planning and evaluation from the public safety agencies and public officials are needed.

Efficiency of service delivery is paramount. Efficiency is defined to be delivering (or being prepared to deliver) the highest level of services to the areas of most need.

Along the same lines of efficiency; all avenues of intergovernmental and interagency cooperation should be investigated. Whether or not consolidation is the answer, prudent service delivery must have significant coordination and cooperation among agencies.

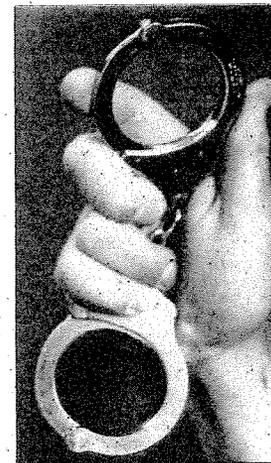
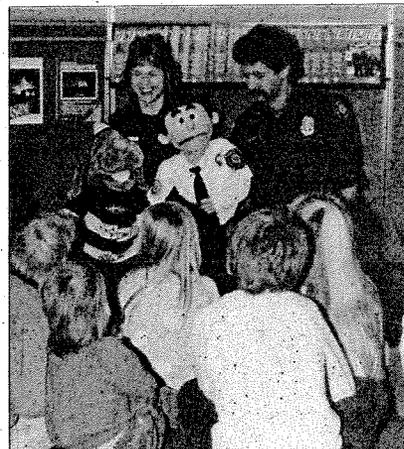
It is strongly felt that prudent long-run strategy involves education. Public safety agencies should continue to work with the schools in programs such as Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.).

In addition to special programs, there should be a return to the inculcation of values/ethics in the curriculum. A larger number

of young people are entering adulthood with no sense of right or wrong or sense of remorse for criminal activity. Portage has room for a multiplicity of beliefs and philosophies, and it is important to broaden students' sensitivities to other cultural and religious beliefs.

Judicial reform initiatives should include specialization on the bench and community dispute resolution mechanisms. The court system needs to move to one with specialties such as family and criminal courts. The jury system should be reformed to acknowledge the true costs of service.

Community dispute resolution mechanisms need to be utilized



to reduce the loads on the courts. One alternative is establishing a public licensed arbitrator whose rulings would be binding as long as both parties agree in advance. With or without such a dispute mechanism, society must devise a way to accelerate the judicial process.

In the penal area enhanced jail facilities are needed in Portage/South Kalamazoo county.

The "boot camp" concept, designed to improve the self-esteem of young convicts, is one proposal. However, the evidence is not substantial enough to give an endorsement. Yet, it is acknowledged that the future must bring new methods or systems for handling prisoners.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Situation Analysis

Portage will be a maturing city by the year 2020. The City needs to carefully plan and manage its development to continue to provide the high quality of life the majority of its residents have always enjoyed.

Balancing Commercial and Residential Growth

While attracting new industries and commercial ventures to Portage is a primary concern, maintaining a balance with the city's residential portion is equally important.

Careful planning for location of both is essential to maintain a high quality of life for Portage residents, who enjoy an enviable lifestyle in terms of good schools, homes, parks, shopping centers and many services.

Current and future attention to city planning will help prevent this quality from diminishing.



Future Airport Location

To accommodate larger aircraft and longer operating hours, a larger airport, probably located some distance from the city, may be needed.

Environmental Emphasis

The trend of acting environmentally responsible will increase by the year 2020, and the preservation of wild and wetlands will figure heavily in city planning.

Deterioration of Residential Properties

Portage is a young city, but already some housing is beginning to show signs of deterioration. As 2020 approaches, the City needs to be ever alert to guard against this urban decay. Strict enforcement of codes, resale property inspections and required smoke detectors are some proposed strategies.

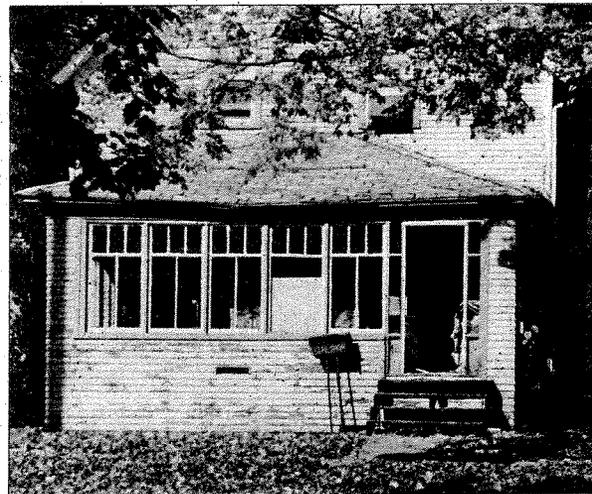
Strategic Direction

- To maintain quality of life.
- To protect natural areas from development.

Goals

The best strategy for meeting all of Portage's future goals is a comprehensive plan. This will help guard against pressures to changing zoning which may not be in the city's best long-range interests.

While Portage probably will not find it economically advantageous to completely consolidate with county governmental units, cooperation in other areas would be beneficial. Currently there is cooperation in sewage and waste water. Future areas of cooperation may be in water, roads, regional zoning and economic development.



SERVICES FOR SENIORS

Situation Analysis

The senior population of Kalamazoo County is 12 percent, which is the same as it is nationwide. By the year 2000, 13 percent of the population will be over the age of 65, 18 percent by 2020 and 22 percent by 2030. Seniors will outnumber teenagers.

The average lifespan is currently 77 years which will increase to 100-110 by the year 2020. A number of services will be needed to accommodate this growing population of older adults.

Profile of Today's Seniors

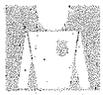
Older adults are healthier, more active, stay in the workforce longer and have increased leisure time. Those in the 65-75 age range are healthier and make less demands on services. Those over the age of 85 will need more services, such as better transportation, day care and in-home services.

Minorities have a shorter lifespan and may not live long enough to collect Social Security and other benefits.

Portage Senior Center

The Portage Senior Center provides services to a little more than one-third of Portage seniors, most of whom are not professional people.

Services provided in the community keep seniors healthy longer and out of institutions. Maximum support by the community, the county, The Area Agency on Aging of Region III and the Michigan Office of Services to the aging will pay big dividends in this regard.



Variety of Available Housing

Strategic Direction

Housing will have to suit the needs of an aging population in 2020. Many of today's youth will not have the types of employment to be able to afford housing on the same scale as that of their parents. A variety of housing will be needed, including single family homes in multiple price ranges, apartments, condominiums and retirement facilities.

Varied housing patterns need to be developed to accommodate this population. Such patterns are shared housing, subsidized housing, assisted living facilities and nursing homes. The need for additional senior housing will continue to grow as a consequence of the expanding senior population.

Information and Education

Elder abuse is a growing problem and an area of concern, especially with the frail elderly. The Kalamazoo County Department of Social Services' adult protective services could hold programs out of the Portage Senior Center to apprise seniors of their options.

Programs regarding guardianship/conservatorship for the aging population and their families could be presented at the Portage Senior Center along with workshops on living wills, medical advocate and durable power of attorney.

It is predicted that a countywide consolidation of services would reduce services to Portage seniors.

The volunteer capacity of older adults needs to be harnessed into meaningful work. This could be coordinated and guided at Portage Senior Center.

Portage Senior Center

The Portage Senior Center will expand both in physical size and in staffing to meet the needs for additional programs. Satellite sites may be developed in the



northwest and southeast quadrants of the city to meet the population growth.

The Portage Senior Center will charge user fees and do fundraising to provide expanded services and increase its operating budget accordingly.

A coordinator of volunteer services should be added to the staff to recruit, train and direct the many volunteers that can be utilized to add needed strength to the community.

The adult day care center will also need a trained director and staff. A paid or volunteer housing coordinator position will be considered.

PUBLIC EDUCATION Portage Public Schools

Situation Analysis

Portage Public Schools' tradition of excellence extends throughout southwest Michigan and beyond. Over the past several years the district has assembled an outstanding staff that is comparable to any district in the state.

- More than two-thirds of Portage teachers have master's degrees or higher.
- All the district's instructional administrators have advanced degrees.
- Two-thirds of the new teachers hired have had previous teaching experience.

The Portage Public Schools also enjoy one of the highest concentrations of financial and human resources. Corporate neighbors such as The Upjohn Company, Stryker Corporation, The W-L Molding Company, Geiger Plastics USA Inc. and the Crossroads and Southland Malls are generous contributors.



In addition, a responsible and responsive residential community provides consistent support.

Varied Curriculum

The Portage schools have designed a comprehensive curriculum based on the belief that all children and adults can learn and that educators have a responsibility to teach them.

The school district offers many exemplary programs and a wide range of opportunities for all residents: comprehensive special education offerings for students ages 0-26, programs which address the developmental needs of young scholars, vocational and adult education programs and programs for the gifted and talented.

In addition, the district leads the county in implementing technology education and has an extremely diversified kindergarten through 12th grade curriculum.

While the Portage community has enjoyed an atmosphere of dynamic growth characterized by excitement and expectation, it cannot lose sight of the forces of change at work within and around the community and beyond.

Education in the Future

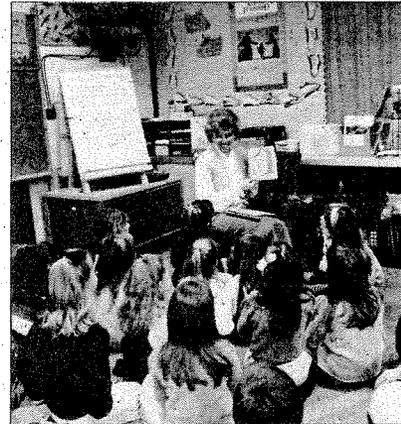
The dynamic growth of the Portage community is an excellent example of the revolutionary changes occurring in the economy and society. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines revolutionary as "marked by or affecting radical change." The Portage schools will experience this change within the near future.

According to futurists Harold Hodgkinson and Marvin Setron, the following may be anticipated in the year 2000 and beyond:

- Workers in the year 2000 are either already in the workforce or should be graduating within the next ten years.
- Today's baby boomers are the elderly of tomorrow and that fact will carry with it all of the social, medical and economic burdens of an aging society.

Industrial Society

The Vista 2000 group reports that to stay competitive in the world marketplace during the next 20 years and beyond, the U.S. must achieve unprecedented productivity increases, a goal which has a price.



An estimated 20 million industrial and information sector jobs will be lost as productivity increases. Automation and foreign competition will eliminate three to ten times more skilled, technical and professional jobs than are created during the next decade.

This downsizing of skilled, technical and professional jobs will be traumatic but necessary to bring the economy parallel with the marketplace. It also signals the beginning of an overabundance of non-skilled entry level positions, creating more jobs than workers.

By the year 2000 there will be 4.5 million fewer entry level workers than there were in 1980.

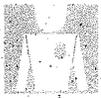
Economic Adjustments

These economic adjustments will also affect the local, social environment. In 1960 19 percent of women with children under age six were in the workforce. Today 72 percent of these women are working.

By the year 2020 women will comprise more than one-half of the U.S. workforce. These statistics have grave implications for the child-care and latchkey programs that the Portage schools provide.

It is clearly indicated that community education, adult education and community-based recreational programs will make more extensive use of school buildings and grounds than do regular education programs.

Life-long learning opportunities will become a global quality-of-life issue as a result of this aging population and the increased amount of leisure time available.



Demographics

The American family unit is also changing. Six out of 10 children born today will live with only one parent for at least one year before they are 18 years of age.

The racial composition of the country is also changing dramatically. With continuing higher birthrates among minority populations, demographers are predicting by the year 2020, one of every three Americans will be non-white.

The school district must prepare all of its students to do productive work in multiple careers where minorities will be the majority in urban center populations.

These national trends, events and statistics are germane to the Portage Public Schools and its planning activities. Each Portage student must be prepared to succeed in a world where jobs are constantly being redefined and requiring greater productivity.

The school district must enable all of its students to reach their highest potential by maximizing the effective use of resources through implementing specific



management systems.

Finally, if the school district is to produce graduates who are prepared to take their place in a competitive marketplace, their educational process must be viewed differently than it is now.

The school district must continue to develop and implement a long-range strategic plan for the district. This plan must be based on the understanding that students must be taught:

- By outstanding teachers empowered through professional development activities to be the very best that they can be.

- In a productive learning environment designed around the tenets of effective schools.
- In a school system structured to maximize the teaching and learning processes for all rather than a system of schools prepared to maximize the potential of some.
- In an educational program judged on the basis of outcomes and results rather than inputs and assumptions.
- By a team of professionals prepared to take the risks and advocate for the very best preparation for the world of the future.

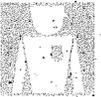
Kalamazoo Valley Intermediate School District

The role of kindergarten through grade 12 education in the Portage community and the Kalamazoo Valley Intermediate School District will play a critical part in preparing the population for the world in which they live.

KVISED will play an even greater role as a liaison between the State Department of Education and the public, private and parochial schools in Kalamazoo County.

KVISED will also have greater responsibilities for monitoring, studying and implementing innovative projects as well as expanding existing services such as special education, vocational education, media services and other services that are needed by local school districts.

KVISED will work more directly with the State Legislature and various state departments in designing legislation and implementing innovative programs that are critical for meeting future educational needs.



The many assets of the local school district and KVSD result from the quality of the community it serves. The Portage community has long been supportive of a standard of excellence in their educational programs. The community support is characterized by countless hours of volunteer support from parents of Portage students.

The joint school/parent partnership is one which benefits not only the school district but the students as well. It is also one which must continue if school systems are to be responsive to the needs of the future.

Strategic Direction

The local school district's resources must identify the purpose, goals and objectives to be developed to meet society's changing educational needs.

Those goals and objectives must then be translated into long range, medium range and operational plans to meet that purpose.

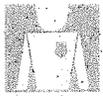
The strategic plan places the district in control of its own destiny and allows it to take an active role in determining its future.



The Portage Public Schools has an obligation to prepare its students for their place in society. Today's school system must examine its priorities and develop appropriate goals and strategies to meet tomorrow's challenges by:

- Developing a program to meet the expanding student population in Portage.
- Developing a program to manage the impending curriculum changes to ensure high academic standards, global competitiveness and greater multicultural sensitivity.
- Integrating subject matter and emphasizing a hands-on approach to math and science instruction.
- Investigating a longer school day/year or other innovative scheduling practices to respond to the demands for increased global competitiveness.
- Developing an adequate and equitable statewide funding structure for education.
- Developing adequate facilities suitable for education in the 21st century.
- Expanding child-care and latchkey opportunities to meet increasing community needs.
- Identifying alternative revenue sources such as support of the Portage Education Foundation to help fund unique learning opportunities.
- Expanding use of technological advances both inside and outside the instructional program.
- Developing productive and equitable schools of choice programs.
- Developing programs that respond to demonstrated community needs.





CONCLUSIONS *Public Safety*

Public safety agencies require strong leaders who provide their employees with professional development training and cross-training and modern, sophisticated equipment.

Public safety agencies cooperate well in the county and continued cooperation is essential. Interagency agreements and potential consolidation should be evaluated for cost effectiveness, not just service efficiency.

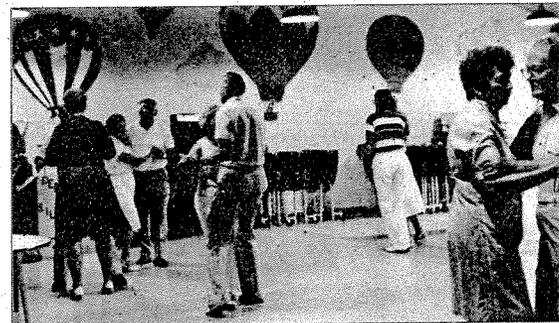
It is believed that the fiscal burden will grow faster than the population because of the need for higher salaries for better trained personnel and leaders, the need to keep up with public safety technological advances and the growth in the population needs because of its demographic changes.



Public safety services are needed in geographic and demographic areas of heavy crime. Severe problems in the judicial/penal systems must be addressed. Broad use of user fees and fee systems that bill commercial or residential entities that over use the public safety agencies are recommended.

Planning and Development

Trend may be toward smaller homes with a need for re-development in older areas. Emphasis will be on code enforcement and maintenance of older homes.



Services for Seniors

Eighteen percent of the population will be 65 and older by 2020. This aging population will require massive changes in the provision of housing, leisure activities, transportation and other areas. More grassroots discussion at all levels in the community is needed regarding retirement and aging issues.

Public Education

Education must be designed to conform to the changing needs of a rapidly evolving society to prepare current and future generations of students to succeed in a world where jobs are constantly being redefined and requiring greater productivity.

Researchers have found that a strong relationship between the home and school is one common characteristic shared by effective schools. Increased student achievement occurs in those schools where school staff and parents work together to promote student learning.

This community and parental support must continue in the Portage schools and the intermediate school district in order to provide the framework for a clear and focused mission. With continued parental and community interest and support, the educational institutions will provide a place where all children and adults can learn and be productive in the year 2020.



Vision Statement

As Portage matures and broadens its residential and commercial base, it will require a viable transportation system that allows for an efficient flow of traffic.

In addition, in 2020 an emphasis will be placed on public transportation and traffic support systems to alleviate traffic congestion.

TRANSPORTATION



Situation Analysis

Portage has established itself as a major provider of retail, commercial and professional services for Kalamazoo County.

To maintain the leadership role that Portage has assumed, it is important to anticipate and plan for the future. However, planning must be flexible to adapt to the transportation needs of 2020.



Costs

Transportation consumes 63 percent of all oil used in the United States. Rising energy cost will result in greater use of energy conservation techniques in both the public and private sectors.

Future automobiles will be safer, lighter, cleaner and more fuel efficient, and alternative power sources for cars will become commonplace.

In spite of these improvements, the anticipated fuel price increases will prevent many people from being able to afford either the purchase price of a car or its maintenance and fueling costs. Because of higher energy cost and traffic congestion within the city, more pressure will be placed on public mass-transit systems.

The composition of the community is also changing. There is already a trend toward a smaller family size, the population is getting older, and the number of women in the workplace is continuing to increase.

Most estimates of economic expansion do not show the tremendous growth experienced

in the previous decades in Portage. Even though the continued economic expansion of the past is not anticipated, planners need to consider the future population of the marketing area as a whole.

Business Expansion

Future expansion of commercial business, professional offices, retailers and restaurants will probably be concentrated on Milham Road east of Westnedge, Centre and then on Lovers Lane south from I-94. Portage and Sprinkle Roads are already experiencing a growth trend.

It is expected that Portage Road will become the second Westnedge in terms of traffic. Two prime targets for future industrial development lie along the Shaver Road and the Sprinkle Road corridors.

Urban sprawl will increase primarily along major vehicle transportation corridors and public mass-transit routes. Already new home construction takes place in more rural areas where people enjoy more space and less taxes.

Future automobile advancements in safety and fuel efficiency may encourage people in remote areas to drive to Portage more frequently than they do now. People must be able to reach the city's resources with minimum inconvenience.

Aesthetic Planning

As important as a viable transportation network is to any healthy community, it is equally important to develop it with planned aesthetic qualities.

A city is not simply a place to work or shop, it is a place in which to live. Street development must be guided by goals and policies that protect the area's history and heritage and preserve the beauty provided by nature, creating a place of quality residential living.



#1 Issue

The City of Portage has two primary goals in considering and implementing improvements to the traffic system: improved traffic safety and improved traffic movement.

It is the city's objective to meet the community needs of a strong transportation network. The economic, environmental and other pressures will determine the demand and need for various modes of transportation. Whether public or private, the majority of traffic will use the street system.

Since the inception of the Portage Community Survey, residents have consistently ranked "Transportation" as the #1 issue facing Portage. Viable transportation is also the #1 goal of the city as its economic growth continues. Consequently, the key areas of emphasis deal with reducing traffic congestion on major city roads.

MAJOR AND LOCAL STREET SYSTEM

Situation Analysis

The foremost area of focus is the major and local street system in which potential problem areas are identified and several possible alternatives and options are suggested.

The second key area evaluated is the current and future modes of transportation.

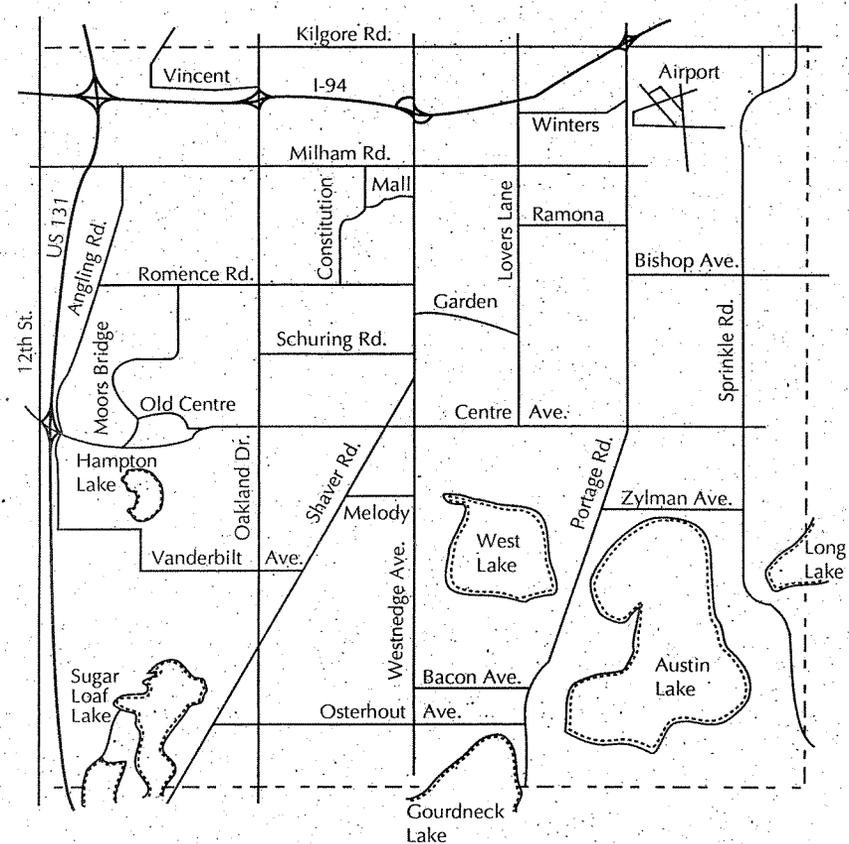
Highways

Strategic Direction

US 131 appears to be adequate as the north/south corridor on the west side of the city. An additional exit and entrance ramp at Romence Road, however, may be necessary in the future.

This ramp would provide a third alternative to Centre Street and I-94 to enter the city from the west. In addition this interchange would alleviate congestion on Oakland Drive.

It makes equal sense to add an exit and entrance ramp off I-94 at Lovers Lane to relieve traffic on South Westnedge. Space con-



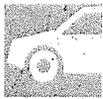
straints may hamper this alternative, but it seems essential to continue to draw from Battle Creek and points east.

East-West Roads

The Romence Road extension has long been an issue. Several options have been considered for their impact on relieving traffic

on Westnedge. Current plans are to extend Romence Road to Lovers Lane. The greatest impact, however, is to connect Romence Road to Portage Road.

The Romence Road extension to the west is also a possibility. This would necessitate a bridge over US 131 to connect Romence to 12th Street. In



addition 12th Street would require some improvements to handle the increased traffic. This would create another major east/west corridor along the city.

Another option already mentioned is to create an exit and entrance ramp off US 131 to Romence Road. With additional widening of Romence, this street could be a major link to the Portage retail area.

An existing main road that needs attention is Centre Street. Widening of this road should be on the agenda in the near future. Ultimately, Centre Street should become four lanes from US 131 on the west to Sprinkle Road on the east.

North-South Roads

Widening of Shaver Road south of Centre Street to four lanes will be required. With anticipated development in that area of the city, traffic levels are expected to increase.

Widening of Oakland Drive to four lanes from Milham Road to Centre Street is also an option. It would make sense to work with the City of Kalamazoo to develop

an overall strategy to maintain Oakland Drive as four lanes going into Kalamazoo.

Expansion of Lovers Lane could significantly relieve the pressure on South Westnedge, especially if an exit and entrance ramp from I-94 is considered feasible. Tying in Lovers Lane to Burdick Street may also facilitate traffic flow to and from Kalamazoo. Portage Road and Sprinkle Road appear to be adequate for the time being.

Service Roads

Further congestion might be removed from South Westnedge in the mall area by utilizing service roads from Milham Road south on each side of Westnedge; one behind Southland Mall and one similarly placed between Westnedge and the Ace Hardware/K-Mart building from Milham to the Target Plaza. The extension of Mall Drive can then be used to connect the north/south service roads. The continuing of Mall Drive to Newport Road or even through to Lovers Lane will help relieve traffic.

MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

Situation Analysis

Public transportation is a major focus. With the changing complexion of the community in the year 2020, alternative modes of transportation may develop as needs change.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Strategic Direction Bus

Higher energy costs and greater traffic congestion will create more pressure for mass transit systems.

Expanding the Metro-Transit system to service more people will help alleviate this congestion. New and more energy efficient modes of public transportation must also be considered.

Another possibility may be to look at downsizing buses for better utilization.

Statistics show that the majority of public transportation users are individuals without access to an automobile. These are individuals who can not afford a car or are

elderly and do not qualify for a driver's license.

Statistics also show that both of these groups will continue to grow. Portage will follow the national trend of having an older community.

Another trend that may continue is the expansion of the lower and upper class. With greater numbers at the poverty level, more people may make use of public transportation. Although mass transit has not proven itself in the Portage area, some alternative transportation in the future might prove feasible.

School Bus

Another opportunity may be to use school buses to supplement public transportation. This may be more cost effective than investing in additional buses.





Shuttle Bus

A shuttle bus service could facilitate movement in three areas. A shuttle could connect Southland Mall, Crossroads Mall, K-Mart and Target. This service could be expanded as need dictates.

Additionally, employers located in traffic congested areas could offer their employees remote parking. A shuttle bus would then be used to move people to and from their work area.

Parking areas on the outskirts of the city could be provided with a shuttle service into the retail areas. All three types of shuttle services would be very helpful during peak shopping times.

Whether this is a seasonal or year-round service, the city would need to work with the major retailers to develop this idea.

Trains

Rail movement through the city is not significant. At this time no increased activity is seen. If the Conrail Track along Shaver Road and through the City of Portage is ever abandoned, the city should acquire this right of way for future use.

One possible use for this land would be to create a bike and/or foot path from City Hall to Bicentennial Park. Another option is to provide a new north/south road through the city.

A third alternative is to develop a commuter train to use the existing tracks. Parking areas adjacent to the tracks could be used as a gathering area for people to park their cars. Stopping points could then be provided all along the route and even into downtown Kalamazoo.

Air Transportation

As to air travel, the current airport is sufficient to handle future traffic. It would be in the best interest of the community for the city to take an active role to assure that air service remains.

Subway and People Mover

Large metropolitan areas thrive on sophisticated public transportation systems, such as subways, people movers and monorails.

This is not seen as a need for the City of Portage by the year 2020.



ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION Bicycles

The City has recognized the need for bike paths around town. Several streets currently have identified areas for bike traffic. Continued development of bike paths should be pursued by the city. These paths should be available throughout the city for both recreational use and transportation around town.

Walking

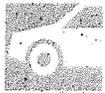
Adequate sidewalks and footpaths should be a continuing goal of the city.

In addition a covered pedestrian walkway between malls and even across Westnedge may be a great asset to the retail area.

This could serve as a connection between areas and an exercise option for winter time walkers.

Recreational (snowmobile and off-road) Vehicles

Snowmobile and off-road trails in and around the city need to be identified for the community to ensure safe use in designated areas.



TRAFFIC SUPPORT SYSTEM

Situation Analysis

The traffic support system can be termed a catch-all for those items that relate to and help support the transportation system.

MAJOR THOROUGHFARE PLAN

Strategic Direction

The City has expended a great deal of time and money upgrading the transportation network and the traffic signal system to accommodate ever increasing traffic levels. The continued function of the city thoroughfare network is imperative as the community grows and develops. In addition the city needs to continually reevaluate the major thoroughfare plan and provide a means for involving maximum feasible citizen participation. This input, along with the police department, the planning commission and the City Traffic Engineer would facilitate maintaining a higher level of success.

Curb Cuts

The planned reduction of curb cuts along the business area of South Westnedge would have a significant impact on traffic flow through the city.

This option must be very sensitive to the needs of the business affected. Working with the business leaders, a mutual concept may be developed to facilitate everyone's needs.

Contra-Flow

Contra-flow is an inexpensive temporary fix to traffic congestion at certain times of day.

By allowing additional lanes in a particular direction at peak traffic times, traffic movement will improve. This bandaid solution may be used until a long term solution is found.

Car Pools

The City should encourage car pools by continuing to provide adequate and convenient parking areas. Information and assistance should be given to encourage car pools among individuals.

Adopt-a-Road

County and state roads have an "Adopt-a-Road" program in which local organizations become responsible for keeping a section of road clean. The City should investigate expanding this concept to city streets or intersections along commercial areas.

Upkeep

Maintenance of existing roads needs to be a priority. To facilitate this activity, a traffic engineer dedicated to monitoring and improving the transportation road system is strongly recommended.

Buffers

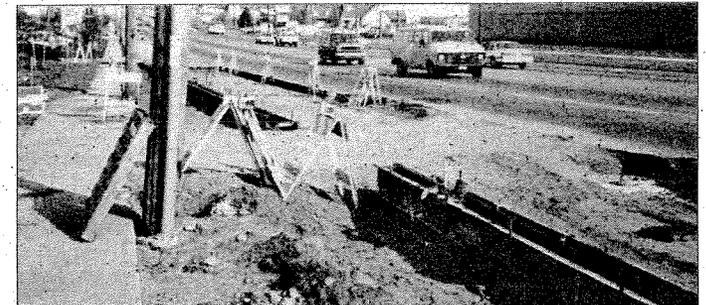
Sight and sound barriers along major roads need to be continually addressed. Appearance along existing and new roadways needs to be planned as much as the road itself.

Constitution Boulevard is a good model for future road projects.

Traffic Lights

The city traffic engineer needs to keep abreast of new technology, such as computerized signals that monitor and adjust to traffic patterns that might improve traffic flow.

It may become necessary to compensate for slower response time at signal changes, due to an older population.





Traffic Signs

An aging population may require larger print on traffic signs. Along with controlling billboards, this will not only make driving easier but safer.

As the community expands to a more diverse culture, it may also be necessary to provide bilingual traffic signs or universal pictures to direct drivers. As our nation moves forward in the metric system, speed limit and distance signs will need to be converted.

Safety

The safety of the residents and visitors to the city is paramount in transportation planning, and many of the items already mentioned address safety issues. In addition the city's visual obstruction elimination program needs to be continued.

Snow Removal

Investigating alternative materials to applying salt to the roads. Consolidating snow removal responsibility and/or contracting these services are recommended.



Environmental

The environmental impact of new roadways along with the effect of residual and gasoline oil runoff from the roads must continue to be considered.

Law Enforcement

The patrolman on the streets should be able to give input into the transportation network studies conducted by the city. This should be over and above the statistics provided by the department.

Joint Approach

Cooperation with the county and the City of Kalamazoo to take a regional approach to transportation is needed.

Parking Lots

The City must work with area business to maintain adequate parking and still foster future business in the area.

Funding

The need to make improvements and the cost involved must be closely scrutinized. The priorities are to maintain existing roadways, improve traffic safety and traffic movement.

No matter what the priorities are, people will expect more for less. Small incremental improvements that follow an overall plan are probably better than larger undertakings.

Impact of Technology

Provide police, fire and rescue vehicles with a device to override a traffic signal while approaching an intersection during an emergency.

Transportation Engineer

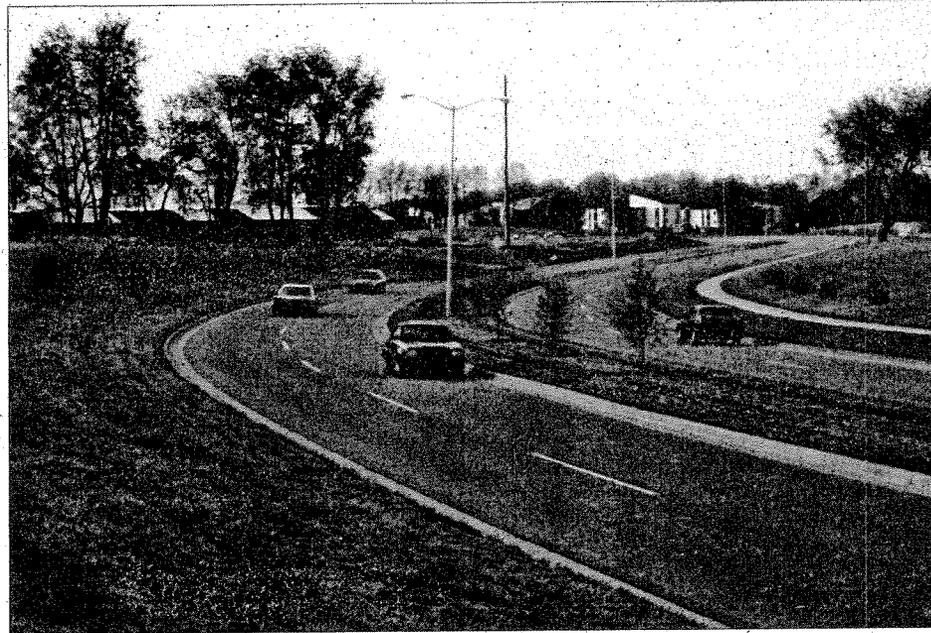
It is strongly recommended that the city support the position of a city traffic engineer responsible for traffic planning. The city transportation engineer would monitor roads, intersections and even traffic lights. This would provide an opportunity to consolidate and intensify transportation planning.



Conclusions

These transportation suggestions would facilitate access from the outlying areas to an ever widening area of commercial business, allow residents convenient access to these areas or allow the ability to bypass the commercial area altogether.

This can all be done while allowing for some form of alternative transportation.





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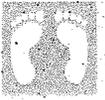
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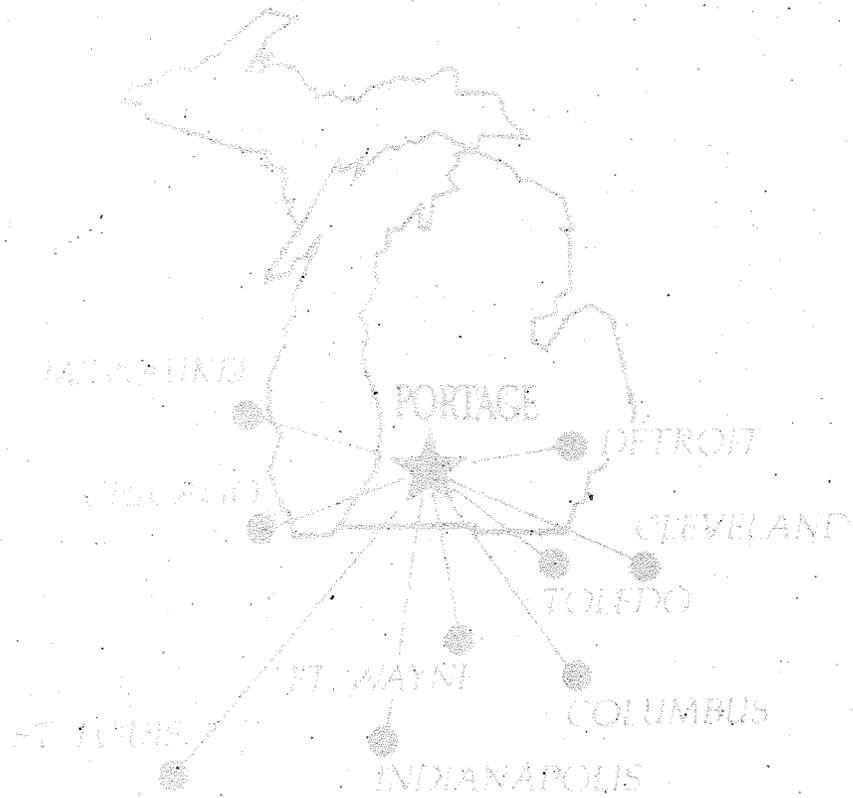
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