

CITY OF  
**PORTAGE**  
*A Place for Opportunities to Grow*

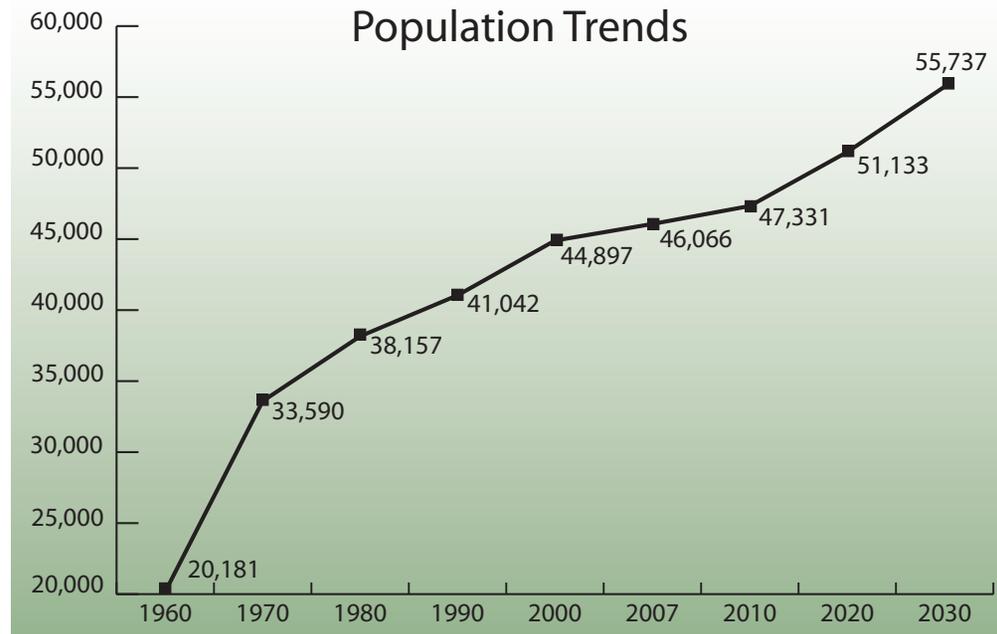
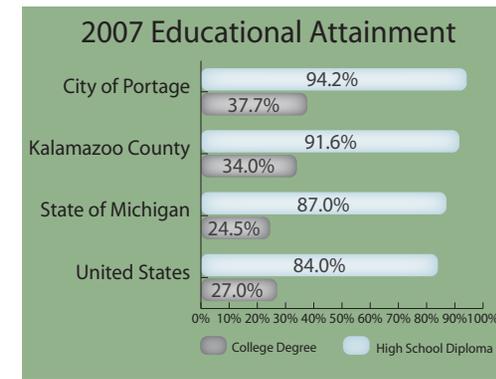
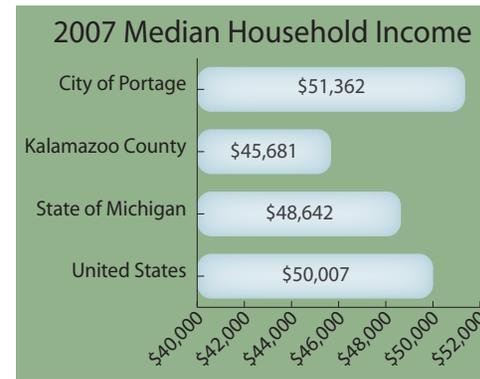
City of Portage, Michigan



# 2008 Comprehensive Plan Summary

# Community Profile

Portage is located in Kalamazoo County in southwest Michigan, half-way between Chicago and Detroit along Interstate 94. Though originally known for its fertile farmland and agricultural production, Portage is now known as a community of fine neighborhoods, a regional retail center for southwest Michigan with an expanding industrial base anchored by Stryker Corporation and Pfizer, Inc. The community has a growing population, desirable housing, excellent schools, numerous shopping and recreation areas, proximity to a variety of post-secondary education opportunities and an educated workforce. Portage is geographically large with a land area of nearly 35 square miles and seven lakes.

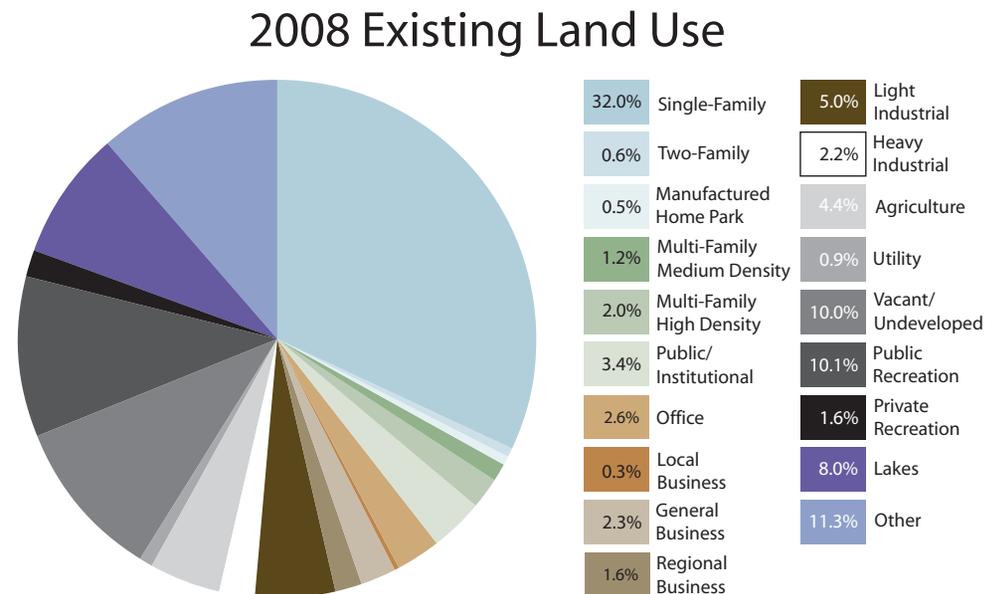


The population of Portage has been growing at steady rate during the 1980's and 1990's and has more than doubled since 1960. By 2000, Portage had a population of 44,897 and Census Bureau estimates published in July 2007 show a population of 46,066. The population is expected to increase to nearly 56,000 by 2030. Portage has maintained the largest share of population growth (in terms of absolute numbers) than any other jurisdiction in the county.

Median household income of Portage residents continues to exceed the county, state and national averages. This trend is also evident in the level of education attainment. Over Ninety-four percent of Portage residents have a

high school diploma or higher and nearly 38% have a bachelors degree or higher.

The analysis of land use information not only identifies the types of existing land use, but also provides insight as to where future development would best occur, as well as where conflicts may exist or can develop. The Comprehensive Plan process provides the basic framework upon which future land use proposals will be developed and guidance for future land use and development decisions. The pie chart below illustrates the percent of the existing 2008 land uses. Single-family residential land uses continue to occupy the greatest percent of land area (32%).



The makeup and general health of an urban economy are key considerations in gauging the rate and amount of land development that is likely to occur. An expanding economy creates new employment opportunities that attract people and results in an increased population, but a growing economy and population also place additional demands on community services in areas such as schools, transportation, public safety and community facilities. Consequently, a balanced or diversified economy is essential to ensure that Portage continues as “a place for opportunities to grow!” The chart below illustrates a balanced Portage economy and local tax base.

## City of Portage Tax Base - 2008



### Key Plan Recommendations

- Encourage commercial development in designated areas and corridors.
- Foster development activities that continue to promote the Portage Commerce Square and City Centre Area.
- Encourage business centers for industry, corporate offices and high technology uses.
- Continue to implement public programs, incentives, regulations and taxation policies consistent with policies for economic development

Taking advantage of the proximity to two major highways (I-94 and US-131) and the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport has led to the success of economic development activities in Portage. Portage has taken a progressive

Goal

**Encourage sensible and sustainable, high-quality office, commercial and industrial uses in designated areas to:**

- Provide for business expansion needs;
- Achieve compatibility with surrounding land uses and environmental features at a pace supportable by the community's existing and reasonably anticipated future infrastructure.

approach to stimulate commercial and industrial economic development activity by providing unique opportunities involving community-based public/private initiatives for businesses and industries to grow.

**Commercial Development** – The largest regional business center in southwest Michigan is located along the South Westnedge Avenue Commercial Corridor. The corridor includes nearly 5 million square feet of business space, with a low vacancy rate. The heart of the corridor is Portage Commerce Square, a major retail area that includes The Crossroads regional mall.

**Industrial Development** – Industrial development is concentrated in two primary locations: Sprinkle Road Industrial Corridor and Shaver Road Business Corridor. These two corridors include many significant manufacturing facilities, including the primary manufacturing facility for Pfizer, Incorporated, the world's largest pharmaceutical company.

**Business Incentives** – Maintaining a business-friendly environment is considered essential to the continued nurturing of commercial and industrial investment and job creation. Business is attracted to Portage because of its:

- Low tax rates
- Full-service capabilities and low water and sewer utility rates.
- Expanded public infrastructure systems.
- Quality of life including recreational and cultural attributes.
- Successful public-private ventures through:
  - Economic Development Corporation
  - Tax Increment Financing Authority
  - Downtown Development Authority
  - Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
  - Local Development Finance Authority

Public services have a direct impact on the development and redevelopment of land, protection of natural features, provision of recreational opportunities, ensuring public safety and enhancement of the quality of community life. Portage continues to make major investments in public infrastructure systems to meet current and future needs.

## Public Utilities

The location and type of public sewer and water systems influence the location, type and intensity of development within a community. In an effort to accommodate new and expanding development in appropriately planned areas of the city, programming for sanitary sewer, water and storm drainage improvements is provided through the annual 10-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP).



The city maintains more than 225 miles of sanitary sewer main and 240 miles of water main. During the next 10 years, the city has programmed millions of dollars in utility improvements to accommodate existing, expanding and new growth.

## Key Plan Recommendations:

- Provide for the health, safety and welfare of Portage residents and maintain high quality community facilities to meet projected changing needs, demographics and life styles and enhance the quality of life.
- Ensure that water, sanitary and storm water systems accommodate the demands of existing and proposed development.
- Promote development of a high-technology utility infrastructure.
- Continue to enhance existing park and recreation resources and programs.
- Continue to annually update the CIP to reflect the current and future infrastructure needs of the community
- Create friendly, walkable business centers with ample lighting, pathways and benches.

Goal

**Efficiently provide, maintain and improve public services necessary to support the needs of existing and future residents and businesses.**

## Recreational Opportunities

The city provides numerous and diverse recreational opportunities in high quality recreational facilities throughout the community. There are several different types of recreational areas/facilities including nearly seven miles of off-road trailways, five local, five community and two regional parks, three nature preserves and several event facilities. Private recreational opportunities are also available including a golf course, sports activity centers, among others.



Ice Rink at Millennium Park



Portage City Hall

## Government Facilities

The City Centre Area (geographic center of the community) is the primary location for local government facilities including City Hall, Police Department, Fire Station No. 1, Senior Center and Public Services. The city is committed to providing efficient, quality municipal facilities to residents, business owners and visitors.

## Library and Education Facilities

In addition to the excellent municipal services, the Portage District Library and Portage Public Schools also provide valuable services to area residents. The library, also located in the City Centre Area, is capable of accommodating 600,000 patron circulations per year and serves a population of 50,000. Portage Public Schools operates eight elementary schools, three middle schools and two high schools. In addition to public schools, there are several charter/private schools in the area. There are also several educational and secondary programs and facilities within Portage and the surrounding region.



Portage District Library

# Housing Opportunities

Housing is an essential resource in any community and people looking for a place to live, or deciding whether to stay within a community, typically focus on a few key factors:

- Character of Neighborhoods
- Recent Trends on Home Value Appreciation
- Diversity of Housing Available to Meet Various Needs and Income Levels
- Quality of the Public School District.

Portage is a city with well-established and attractive neighborhoods. The creation, preservation and enhancement of neighborhoods are essential to the success of the community. Neighborhoods define and characterize the unique cultural and historical qualities of the city. Intrinsic to the success of Portage neighborhoods and to a stable and attractive quality of life for all citizens is an emphasis on preservation and rehabilitation of the housing stock, the availability of home ownership with housing options for all segments of the population and the proximity to community facilities and services.

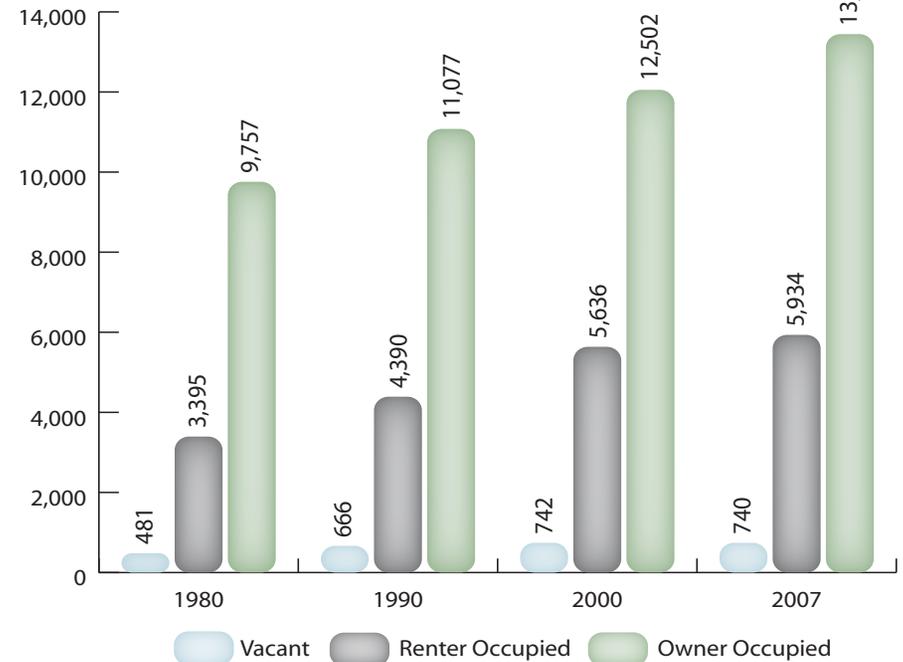
## Key Plan Recommendations

- Encourage single family home and lot ownership for all income groups in an effort to maintain the single-family character of Portage.
- Protect stable neighborhoods from intrusive land uses and motor vehicle traffic.
- Provide or improve public facilities and services to support quality residential areas, such as street and walkway design, parks, recreation and municipal facilities.
- Provide assistance and incentives to local nonprofit housing organizations, housing providers and other groups to expand housing opportunities.
- Promote awareness of the needs for housing and services for special groups such as: low to moderate-income households, seniors, physically challenged, and families in need of child or adult day care.

Goal

**Provide a diverse and stable housing stock providing for a range of housing opportunities for all income groups and a quality living environment for all persons.**

## Housing Units



## Household Information

	Number of Households	Average Household Size
<b>1980</b>	<b>13,152</b>	<b>2.89</b>
<b>1990</b>	<b>15,467</b>	<b>2.64</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>18,800</b>	<b>2.45</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>19,378</b>	<b>2.40</b>
<b>1980-2007 % Change</b>	<b>47.30%</b>	<b>-17.00%</b>