



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

Big Changes Coming to the Curbside Recycling Program

“Single-Stream” Recycling Means No More Sorting!

The City of Portage is committed to the conservation of natural resources and minimizing the strain on the planet. Through a dedicated, voter-approved millage, the *Curbside Recycling Program* provides for collection of recyclable materials such as newspapers, magazines, cardboard, glass, metal cans and plastics.

The city currently operates a “dual-stream” recycling program, requiring residents to separate rigids (plastics and metals) and fibers (paper and cardboard) in an 18-gallon bin that is carried to the curb on a weekly basis for collection. The bins are then manually dumped in the appropriate truck collection box by the recycling truck driver.

Recycling is a shared responsibility and requires citizen engagement. Key to a successful residential recycling program is the ease of participation for the citizen. In an effort to simplify the act of recycling for the general public and to increase the level of recycling in the community, the city is pleased to announce that the *Curbside Recycling Program* will undergo significant changes **beginning October 1, 2015**.

Single-Stream Recycling

No More Sorting! Mix any acceptable recyclable items into a single container. Simply place all of your clean recyclables in the cart – plastics labeled #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #7 and #8; any clear, brown, blue or green glass; any aluminum cans; any bi-metal and steel cans; aluminum foil; brown bags; magazines; phone books; catalogs; cardboard and newspapers.

96-Gallon or 64-Gallon Wheeled Cart

Ditch the bin! Residents will have a choice of a 96-gallon or 64-gallon wheeled cart to replace the current 18-gallon bin. The cart is easier to maneuver to the curb and prevents recyclable materials from being blown around the neighborhood on windy days.

Select Your Cart Size

Watch your mailbox in mid-August for a postcard from the city that contains your individual reference number. Then, simply select your cart size by visiting www.portagecartselect.rehrgigcarts.com or returning the postage-paid card **by September 1, 2015**. Beginning September 21, wheeled carts will be delivered to those residents who have responded to the postcard.



Residents may keep the existing 18-gallon bin or return it to the Portage Department of Public Services (7719 South Westnedge Avenue) from October 1 through October 16. **Beginning October 1, recycling will only be collected from the new wheeled cart.**

Biweekly Collection

Half the trips to the curb! The introduction of larger wheeled carts means more space to store recyclable materials and fewer trucks through your neighborhood. More importantly, collection of materials once every two weeks will result in a decrease in fuel consumption and emissions and the wear and tear on city streets. The day of the week

that your recycling is collected stays the same – it will now be collected every other week. (Consider this when selecting your wheeled cart size.) A calendar of your recycling dates will be delivered to you along with the new wheeled cart.

We know that big changes sometimes cause many questions. Two public meetings have been scheduled where city staff will review the changes to the *Curbside Recycling Program* and allow citizens to ask questions and voice any concerns. Meetings will be held in the Council Chambers at Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue) on Wednesday, August 12, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. and Wednesday, September 16 at 7:00 p.m. Additional details will be made available in the September and October editions of the *Portager* and at www.portagemi.gov.

Why Recycle?

- ◆ Reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators
- ◆ Conserve natural resources such as timber, water and minerals
- ◆ Prevent pollution by reducing the need to collect new raw materials
- ◆ Save energy
- ◆ Reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global climate change
- ◆ Help sustain the environment for future generations
- ◆ Help create new, well-paying jobs in the recycling and manufacturing industries in the United States

Visit <http://www2.epa.gov/recycle> to learn more about the benefits of recycling.

Share the Road is the message on Oakland Drive

Cycling continues to be a popular means of recreation, commuting and transportation in Portage. The City Administration has studied various applications, such as bicycle lanes, trailways and shared paths as means to improve the safety and enjoyment of cycling.

Oakland Drive is an important bicycle route between Kalamazoo and Portage and serves as a route for cyclists throughout Kalamazoo County. Both Portage and Kalamazoo have constructed dedicated bicycle lanes on Oakland Drive, but the section between I-94 and Kilgore Road was too narrow for an exclusive bicycle lane without losing much-needed capacity for motor vehicles.

As part of the recently completed Oakland Drive Reconstruction project from I-94 to Kilgore Road, a traffic analysis was completed to determine the safest, least intrusive and most effective method of communicating the shared use of the street by motorist and cyclists. A newer national standard designates the outer lane of such roadways as a “shared lane” used by both bicyclists and motorists. The recent resurfacing project on Oakland Drive was an ideal location to initiate this style of lane designation in Portage.

The outside lane of Oakland Drive in this area is designated as a “shared use lane,” meaning that motorist and cyclists can share the lane and that “bikes belong.” The white pavement markings, known as “Sharrows,” reinforce the shared use of the traffic lane and also inform the cyclist to ride to the right side of the traffic lane. Sharrows are becoming more popular throughout the state as communities look for ways to make urban streets bike friendly. This application is just another way Portage is **A Natural Place to Move**.



PORTAGE



Save the Date!

Visioning Renewal Event
October 3, 2015

In 2007, together with City Council and city staff, 133 Portage residents helped to develop the framework for the future of Portage through the Portage 2025 visioning process. Visions and goals for what the community could be like in the year 2025 in seven key areas were developed: Culture and Leisure, Economic Development, Environment and Natural Resources, Human Services, Municipal Services, Neighborhoods and Transportation.

To build upon the Portage 2025 vision, the Portage 2025 Renewal Event was held in 2008. Almost eighty residents reviewed the exciting progress of the first year and created strategies for achieving each area’s top goals. Participants also developed preliminary concepts for a collective vision of the Portage City Centre area.

On Saturday, October 3, 2015, the community will again come together to review the progress to the Portage 2025 established goals and refine future city goals. We hope for a broad representation of individuals throughout the community to sign up and participate. Participants must be registered City of Portage voters.

Watch for more information and sign-up instructions in the *Portager* and at www.portagemi.gov. For now, save the date!

Busy Construction Season Running On Schedule!

The 2015 construction season is well underway and work is continuing on schedule. A project on Oakland Drive to rehabilitate a culvert and resurface the roadway, along with the first half of the Local Street Reconstruction Project, are complete. The following projects are ongoing or set to get underway in the coming weeks:

South Westnedge Avenue Reconstruction

This major project is underway, consisting of asphalt milling and repaving and replacement of existing cast iron water main with new ductile iron water main, fire hydrants and water services. The project also includes replacement of the Milham Avenue / South Westnedge Avenue traffic signal, along with sidewalk improvements to meet ADA requirements. Work on this significant project is on schedule and set for completion in August.



Work continues along South Westnedge Avenue.

Osterhout Avenue Reconstruction

Replacement of the Grand Elk railroad crossing at Osterhout Avenue is part of this project, along with installation of sanitary sewer between Lloy Street and South Westnedge Avenue. Also part of the project is pavement resurfacing and widening of bike lanes. The replacement of the railroad crossing is complete and the remainder of the project is scheduled to begin on August 3. During construction, a detour route will be established for through traffic. The project is anticipated to be complete in October.

Lovers Lane Traffic Signal Interconnection

A traffic signal interconnection project is planned to upgrade and interconnect traffic signals along the Lovers Lane corridor between East Kilgore Road and Romence Road. The project involves new traffic signal hardware to improve coordination of the signal controllers and traffic progression in this area. Construction is scheduled for this fall.

Pine View Drive Sanitary Sewer

This project consists of the installation of sanitary sewer main and resurfacing on Pine View Drive from Chaucer Street to Bacon Avenue. The project is scheduled to begin at the end of August. Pine View Drive will be open to local traffic only during construction. Work is set to be complete in October.

The City of Portage appreciates your patience as the 2015 construction season continues into the fall. "Thanks to our many understanding businesses while we improve Portage roadways," commented City Manager Larry Shaffer. "I would ask that our citizens continue to support Portage businesses during the construction season."

Want more information? Construction project updates and changes to traffic patterns are posted at www.portagemi.gov > Departments > Transportation & Utilities > Construction Projects and through **PORTAGEALERT** (see page 4 for details). Questions about any construction project can be directed to the Department of Transportation and Utilities at 329-4422.

Got Paint?

FREE! Latex Paint Recycling ECO-Party!

When: August 22, 2015 - 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Where: Department of Public Services Facility at 7719 South Westnedge Avenue

The City of Portage, in cooperation with Paint Recycling Services and ePaint Recycling, offers recycling of latex paint and the paint can for Portage residents. Join the party and help prevent paint sludge, metal and plastic from being buried in landfills. ePaint Recycling partners with Habitat for Humanity to recycle and remanufacture paint, which is sold in Habitat for Humanity ReStores.

- ◆ Latex Paint Only. (Oil-based paint can be safely disposed at the Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste Center. Call 373-5211 or visit www.kalcounty.com/hhw for more information.)
- ◆ Paint that has been mixed with anything, including other paint, cannot be accepted.

For more information, visit www.paintrecyclingservices.com or call 329-4444.



Friendly Reminder

Portage residents are reminded of the importance of property maintenance activities. Desirable, high-quality neighborhoods are key to Portage remaining *A Natural Place to Move!* Please take time to properly maintain your property by controlling weeds and keeping lawns mowed on a regular basis. Growth in excess of eight inches is prohibited by city ordinance. To view the complete City of Portage Code of Ordinances and learn more about these and other community quality matters, visit the Quick Links section of the city website at www.portagemi.gov. To report a community quality concern, please contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4477 or use the on-line Report It! tool on the city website.



Board & Commission Spotlight

Environmental Board

The Portage Environmental Board is a nine-member board tasked to advise City Council on matters pertaining to the environment and the protection and enhancement of the groundwater resources of the city. The board advocates for the appropriate consideration of environmental and groundwater issues.

The Environmental Board is an outgrowth the Groundwater Commission, which was established in 1985 to oversee the protection of the city's groundwater resources, the source of the city municipal water supply. The Groundwater Commission was dissolved in 1991 and its responsibilities were assigned to the Environmental Board. The board deals with a number of issues as directed by City Council. Recent board activities include review of the single-stream recycling initiative; control of invasive plant species, especially purple loosestrife and garlic mustard species; installation of native plant restoration on Garden Lane and public education of environmental issues facing Portage and the area.

The Environmental Board serves as the oversight body of the city's Mandatory Sanitary Sewer Connection Program and for naturalized lawn applications. Property owners requiring sewer connection and having financial difficulties can appeal the required connection to sanitary sewer to the Environmental Board and obtain relief from connection for up to 18 months. Additionally, residents that desire to vary from the traditional mowed grass lawn can make an application to the city for a naturalized lawn, which will be reviewed by the Environmental Board as it relates to land management plans which allow for grasses that exceed the

city ordinance requirement of eight inches in height.

Upcoming projects for the board include a major public education and involvement program as the city transitions to a single-stream recycling program and research and investigation into the impacts of deer population in the Portage area (see related information below).

The Portage Environmental Board is currently studying existing data and seeking additional input from Portage residents regarding the impact of the deer population in Portage. A review of the number of car/deer crashes within the city limits over the last seven years reveals a decreasing trend in the number of accidents. Combined with the effects of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) on the deer herd in Southwest Michigan in 2012, the data seems to indicate a decrease in the deer population in Portage. However, the Environmental Board will continue to track data for the purposes of developing recommendations to the City Council.



Portage citizens can help by completing a quick online survey about deer activity in Portage. Visit www.portagemi.gov > Boards & Commissions > Environmental Board to complete the survey. Your information will help shape future decisions about managing the deer population in Portage.

Portage Seeks Volunteers for Advisory Boards

The City of Portage is seeking Portage residents and registered voters to serve on various volunteer Council Advisory Boards and Commissions. City Council looks to these volunteers for input in various areas, including construction review, community planning and senior citizen activities. Specifically, City Council will be making appointments and/or reappointments to the: Construction Board of Appeals (a mechanical contractor), Environmental Board, Historic District Commission, Human Services Board, Park Board, Senior Citizen Advisory Board and Economic Development Corporation/Tax Increment Financing/Brownfield Redevelopment Authority.

If you are interested in serving on any of these boards or commissions, please submit your application to the City Clerk no later than September 8, 2015 for interviews with City Council on October 6, 2015.

The meeting times and responsibilities of each of the Boards and/or Commissions vary and can be obtained along with an application form at www.portagemi.gov, by contacting the Office of the City Clerk by mail, in person at City Hall, or by calling 329-4412. Take this opportunity to learn about your city, serve the residents and make a positive contribution to the Portage community!

Summer Isn't Over Yet! Get Outside and Experience It!

Portage residents don't need to look far for opportunities to enjoy the outdoors this summer. With 17 park sites located throughout the city, the Parks & Recreation Division offers year-round seasonal recreation opportunities. The 2015 Summer Programs and Event Brochure (delivered with your May *Portager* and viewable at www.portagemi.gov) provides all the details for a summer packed full of recreation opportunities, summer camps and special events. See below for a sampling of Parks & Recreation opportunities in August.

Ramona Park Beach

Open seven days a week through Labor Day, Ramona Park Beach offers a sandy swim area monitored by lifeguards, beach volleyball courts, picnic areas, a fishing dock and one of Portage's most loved playgrounds!



Workouts in the Park at Ramona Park

Beach Bootcamp August 1
FREE 9 - 10 a.m.
Enjoy the intense and efficient cardio and strength-training workout!

Out in the Park Discovery Program

Incredible Insects at Westlake Nature Preserve August 3
FREE 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Bring a net and your favorite insect book (or use ours) and explore the many insects that can be found at this great location.

School of Fish Day Camp at Ramona Park

Registration Deadline: August 5, 2015
Advanced Anglers (ages 9 - 14) August 10 - 13
\$85 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Intermediate and experienced young anglers will learn a variety of skills such as jigging, advanced knots, artificial lures, introduction to fly fishing and much more.



2015 GET ACTIVE PORTAGE!

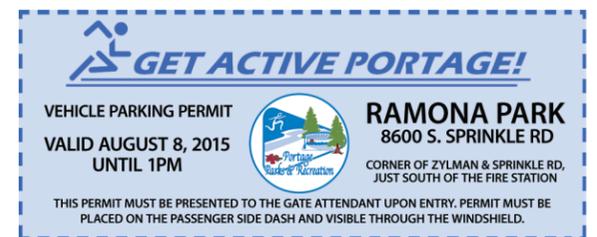
Saturday, August 8 at Ramona Park
8600 South Sprinkle Road

Youth Triathlon 8:30 a.m.
Presented by Spirit Racing, LLC (Check in begins at 7 a.m.)

Young triathletes will be timed and awards will be presented for top finishers in each age group (6-9 years and 10-13 years) but participation is the primary goal. Race courses are within Ramona Park and closed to vehicle traffic for the race duration, ensuring a very safe and controlled environment. Download complete course maps from the event web site and practice the courses in advance of the event. All athletes must be pre-registered online at www.kidsgetactive.us.

Ramona Park Health Fair 9 a.m.
Presented by the Portage Park Board

Learn how to live a healthier lifestyle. Participate in activities provided by local health and wellness vendors. Try out a kayak or stand up paddle board, courtesy of **Lee's Adventure Sports**, or try out an outdoor workout with expert instruction from **Just Move Fitness & More!**



What's Happening at the Portage Senior Center?



Cornhole Tournament

Saturday, August 8
8:30 a.m. Check In, 9:00 a.m. Start
\$10 / 2-person team

The Portage Senior Center proudly presents its first-ever Cornhole Tournament. This event is open to PSC members and their families (tournament participants must be at least 10 years old). Registration forms can be picked up at the PSC Reception Desk. Forms and payments must be returned no later than Monday, August 3. Prompt registration is encouraged as there is a 32-team limit. Prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place teams.

9-Hole Golf Scramble

Thursday, September 10
8:30 a.m. Check In, 9:00 a.m. Shotgun Start
States Golf Course, Vicksburg
\$35 / Golfer, \$140 / Foursome
(Includes lunch and 9 holes with cart)

The Portage Senior Center will host a 9-hole golf scramble at States Golf Course. Registration forms can be picked up at the PSC Reception Desk, and returned no later than Thursday, September 3. Registration fees include 9 holes of golf with cart and lunch.

Senior Citizens Day Celebration Friday, August 21, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. Free: Open to the Public

The PSC is hosting a Senior Citizens Day Celebration! This event will include refreshments, entertainment and an opportunity to be recognized for accomplishments. Come and enjoy this special day with us! Open to the public.

Survey Says, "We Want Evening Meals!"

The results are in, and Portage Senior Center members said they would like the PSC to offer special evening meals! The PSC will begin providing an evening meal on the third Tuesday of each month, beginning in August. Meal service will run from 5:00 - 6:30 p.m., and will be provided by a local caterer. These meals are open to the public and participants can request their meals "to go" when making reservations.

Reservations are requested no later than one day prior to the day the meals take place. These special dinners are available for a suggested donation of only \$10.00. Main entrees are listed below, and all meals will include sides, dessert & beverage. Call the PSC Reception Desk at 329-4555 to make your reservation.

- ◆ August 18 - Hot Chicken Salad
- ◆ September 15 - Pot Roast
- ◆ October 20 - Chicken Casserole
- ◆ November 17 - Roast Pork

(Please note an evening meal will not be served in December.)

More Portage Playgrounds Find New Purpose Overseas

Last year, the playground equipment from Westfield Park was given new life at an orphanage and Christian school in Kenya. This summer, children in the small town of Zapote, Guatemala will enjoy the recently replaced playgrounds from Oakland Drive Park and Portage Creek Bicentennial Park.

Zapote is remote and poor. A stout vehicle is required to get there as the rustic infrequently-traveled road traverses multiple rivers, which after a big rain are impassable. The population of 3,000 live on about \$2 a day per family and half the people are aged 18 or under.

The play equipment from Portage, re-constructed in June by residents of the greater Kalamazoo area, serve the entire Zapote community. The playground was built next to a Christian school of 220 children, operated by Kids Alive International and the playground was purposefully built outside the school's walls so the entire community can enjoy it.



Those who came from Guatemala City for the playground dedication said that they believe it to be the largest and nicest playground in all of Guatemala. Amazing when you consider that the play equipment was originally built in Portage in 1991 (Bicentennial Park) and 1992 (Oakland Drive Park). "People are very happy it is open to the whole village and not just the school," Lea Rebeca Sicajol, the director at Source of Hope Christian School in Zapote remarked. "One of the villagers said, 'You are not just words. You really do what you say,'" said Sicajol.

Rich Anderson, a Plainwell resident and employee with Kids Alive International said, "Thanks to the entire community of Portage for your willingness to repurpose your playgrounds. The play equipment loved by you and your kids will be loved by multiple generations in Kenya and now Guatemala."

Later this year Kids Alive will repurpose two more Portage playgrounds set for replacement (Lakeview Park and Schrier Park). The refurbished play equipment will find new homes next summer in the Dominican Republic. If you are interested in helping to remove, refurbish or rebuild Portage playgrounds please contact Rich Anderson at rich.anderson@kidsalive.org.



Voters Head to the Polls on August 4

The Office of the City Clerk is preparing for the Special Election to be held on August 4, 2015. During this election voters will be asked to vote on a millage proposal regarding public transit. The Central County Transportation Authority, which was formed to operate and provide fixed-route bus public transportation within its geographic boundary, is seeking authorization from electors to levy up to 0.75 mills. (See additional information below.)

Precinct Information

The City of Portage is divided into 19 voting precincts. Where you vote depends on where you live. All voting locations will be open. If you are unsure of your polling location, either review your voter identification card, visit the Michigan Voter

Information Center at www.michigan.gov/vote or contact the Office of the City Clerk at 329-4511.

Permanent Absentee Voter

The City of Portage maintains a permanent list of absentee voters for those interested voters who are over the age of 60 or meet various criteria. Prior to each election, voters on the permanent list automatically receive an absentee ballot application that must be completed and returned to the Office of the City Clerk no later than 2:00 p.m. on the Saturday before an election. To be placed on the permanent list, please contact the Office of the City Clerk at 329-4511.

Voters in the City of Portage, as well as the cities of Kalamazoo and Parchment and the townships of Comstock, Kalamazoo and a portion of Oshtemo, will be asked to consider a millage that will fund public transit. The Central County Transportation Authority millage request is for up to 0.75 mills for a five-year period from 2016 through 2020. The cost of the 0.75 millage request for a homeowner whose home has a market value of \$160,000 (\$80,000 taxable value) is approximately \$60 per year. The millage, if approved, will:

- ◆ Maintain current levels of bus service
- ◆ For most routes will add daytime Sunday bus service
- ◆ For most routes will add extended nighttime hours for 2nd/3rd shift workers and students
- ◆ Increase frequencies on heavily used bus routes, reducing wait time for the next bus.

If approved, the millage is projected to generate \$3.5 million in 2016, which is a key source of funding used for

leveraging State of Michigan and Federal operating grants. Voter approved millages represent about 29% of public transit operating revenues. Without this source of funding public transit service would be reduced, with significant cuts to service hours and the number of bus routes.

In 2014, there were over 3.2 million rides provided on public transit. Buses currently operate six days per week (except Sunday), from 6:15 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. There are six bus routes serving Portage. The second highest ridership route in the system provides service on South Westnedge Avenue to the Crossroads Mall, with 387,000 rides provided in 2014. Based on rider surveys, bus service is a key source of transportation for accessing jobs, education and services.

For more information about the millage request, call the Central County Transportation Authority at 337-8087 or visit kalamazoo.transit.com. For more information about bus service, visit kmetro.org.

Be a Property Steward!

Inspect and Clean Street Gutters and Drainage Grates

Quick intense rainstorms can cause water ponding on streets and clogged storm drainage grates are



a major cause of storm water ponding during rain storms. The Portage Department of Transportation & Utilities reminds residents of the need to inspect and clean street gutters and storm drainage grates abutting your property on a regular basis.

- ◆ Don't blow grass clippings, leaves or debris into the street. When it rains, storm water carries these materials down the gutter to the nearest drainage grate, oftentimes clogging the grate.
- ◆ Periodically inspect grates abutting your property and remove accumulated debris. Major maintenance needs can be reported to the Transportation & Utilities Department at 329-4422.
- ◆ Never pour used motor oil, chemicals or foreign substances into drainage grates or street gutters.
- ◆ Never use a street drainage basin as a "garbage collector" or for pet wastes.

These simple preventative actions will help to keep the storm water system functioning at a maximum level and minimize storm water ponding in the street and potentially onto private property.



7900 South Westnedge Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002-5160

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Have You Signed Up?

PORTAGEALERT allows the city to send urgent voice and/or text messages to home phones, businesses, local agencies and mobile phones in just minutes during emergencies or other urgent situations. **PORTAGEALERT** will also be used to distribute service reminders such as snowplowing progress updates during major snow events, Spring Cleanup Program dates, Quarterly Brush Collection dates and more. Sign up and stay connected!



Visit www.portagemi.gov or scan the QR Code to register your contact information. Those without internet access are encouraged to call 329-4405 to provide current contact information.

Portage City Council

Portage City Council meetings are held on Tuesday evenings at Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue) in Council Chambers at 7:30 p.m. and are always open to the public.

The City Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city. Citizens are encouraged to contact the City Administration with concerns or complaints about city services by calling Complaint Resolution at (269) 329-4404 or by visiting www.portagemi.gov > Report It!



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Televised City Meetings

All City of Portage City Council, Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings can be viewed live on channel 190 and via live streaming at <http://www.publicmedianet.org/watch-live>. AT&T U-Verse customers can access the City of Portage government meetings on channel 99 and then follow the prompts to access the various meetings.



August

- 6 7:00 p.m. Planning Commission Meeting
- 11 7:30 p.m. City Council Meeting
- 20 7:00 p.m. Planning Commission Meeting
- 25 7:30 p.m. City Council Meeting