



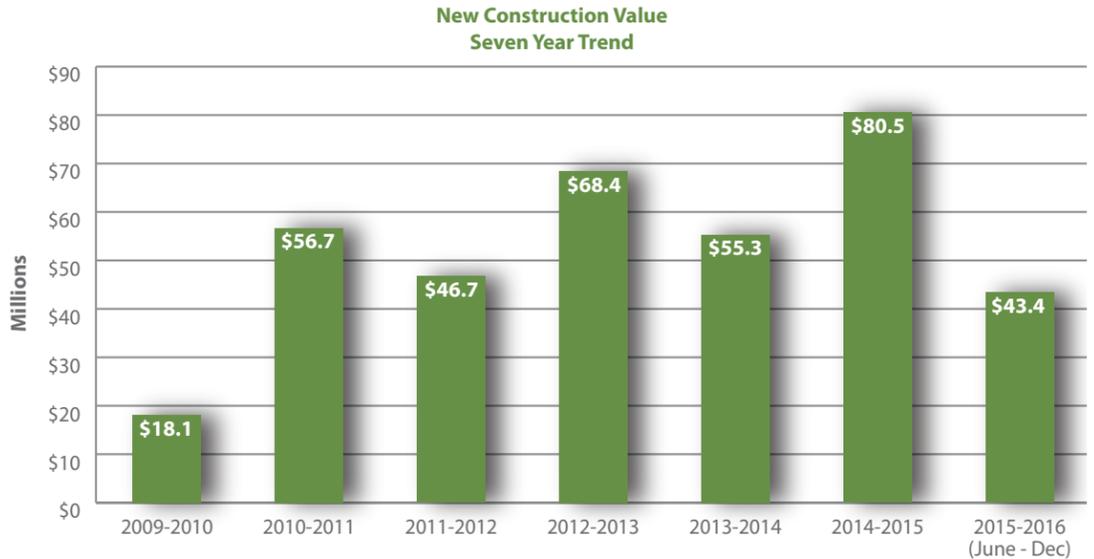
7900 South Westnedge Avenue
 Portage, Michigan 49002
 www.portagemi.gov
 (269) 329-4400

Portage Economy Remains Positive

The local economy remains confident and continues to show signs of positive growth in Portage. As reflected in the accompanying chart, in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009-2010, immediately following a period of significant economic decline, only \$18.1 million in new construction value was recognized by the City of Portage. In comparison, FY 2010-2011 through the first part of FY 2015-16 have demonstrated a significant increase and affirmative growth in development activity. New construction value peaked in FY 2014-15 with a value of \$80.5 million, and for the first half of FY 2015-16, new construction value has already been recorded at \$43.4 million.

Major developments in recent months include senior living and single family housing options and commercial businesses are continuing to grow and expand. Based on the most recent construction value data for FY 2015-2016, investment in the community shows confidence by the private sector. Significant residential, commercial and industrial projects that have been initiated in the city during first part of FY 2015-2016 are noted at the right.

“As the economy continues to improve, Portage must leverage all of our great community assets to attract business and jobs,” commented Mayor Peter Strazdas. “Improvements to the school system, public safety, infrastructure and regional amenities provide a quality of life that will attract quality companies and jobs. We look forward to seeing successes in the coming year.”



Significant Projects Initiated This Year

Residential

- ◆ Story Point, 3951 West Milham Avenue - new senior living community with independent and assisted living units.
- ◆ Copperleaf, Phase 1, 3800 West Milham - construction of 39 new single-family residential lots.
- ◆ Bickford of Portage, 4713 West Milham Avenue - building addition for 16 assisted senior living units.

Commercial

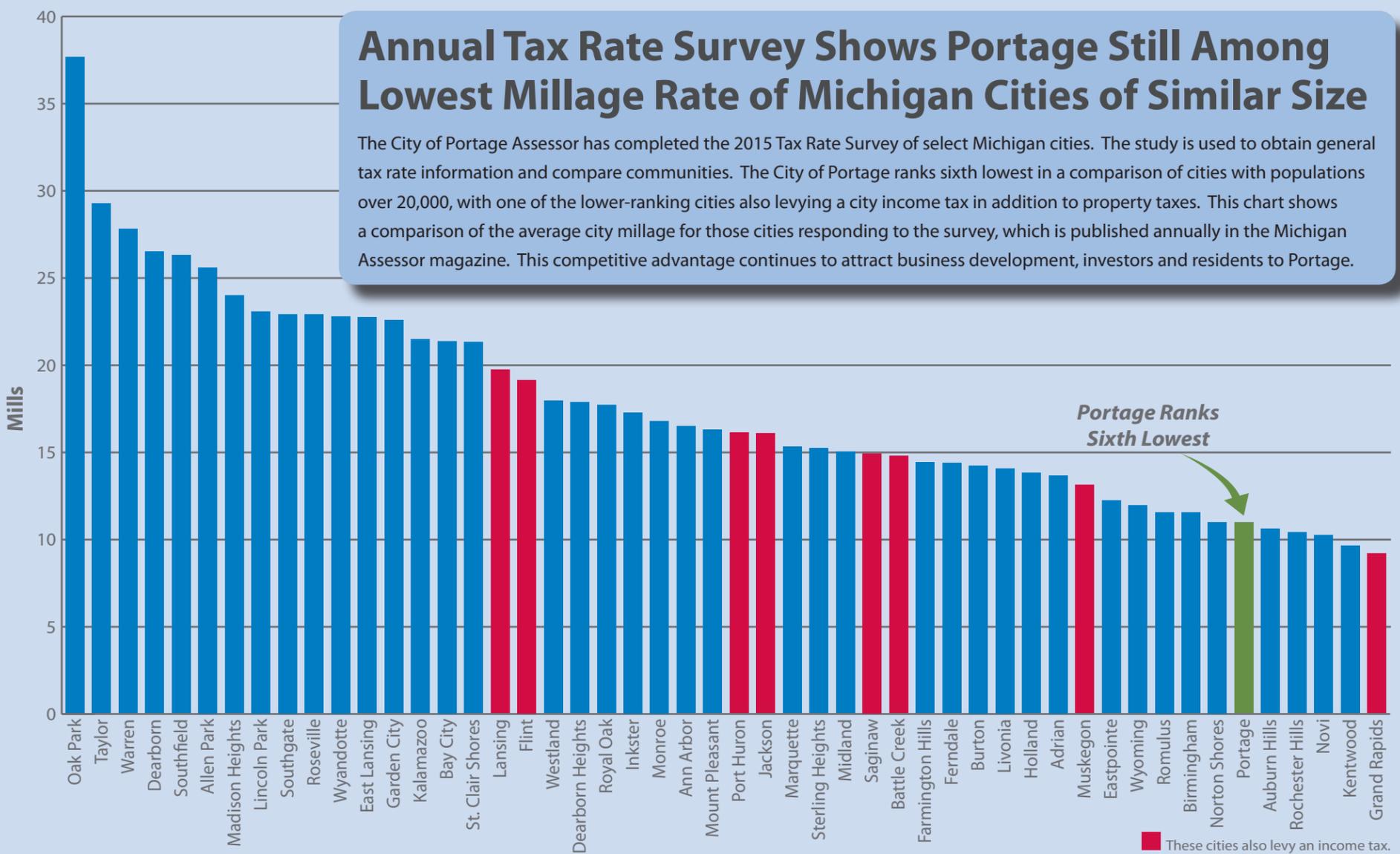
- ◆ Monelli's Italian Grill and Sports Bar, 7141 South Westnedge Avenue - new restaurant.
- ◆ YMCA, 2900 West Centre Avenue - recreational building addition.
- ◆ Sanford Financial Services, 590 West Centre Avenue - building addition and remodel.

Industrial

- ◆ Stryker Corporation, 4100 East Milham Avenue - multiple projects at Stryker Instruments and Stryker Medical.
- ◆ Pfizer Corporation, 7000 Portage Road - multiple projects within manufacturing campus, with a 97,500 square foot warehouse addition pending.

Annual Tax Rate Survey Shows Portage Still Among Lowest Millage Rate of Michigan Cities of Similar Size

The City of Portage Assessor has completed the 2015 Tax Rate Survey of select Michigan cities. The study is used to obtain general tax rate information and compare communities. The City of Portage ranks sixth lowest in a comparison of cities with populations over 20,000, with one of the lower-ranking cities also levying a city income tax in addition to property taxes. This chart shows a comparison of the average city millage for those cities responding to the survey, which is published annually in the Michigan Assessor magazine. This competitive advantage continues to attract business development, investors and residents to Portage.



■ These cities also levy an income tax.

City Continues Process to Update Consolidated Plan

In September 2015, the City of Portage began the planning process to update its five-year Consolidated Plan for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. The City of Portage CDBG Program is funded by an annual entitlement grant awarded to the community by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). "The Consolidated Plan is designed to help local jurisdictions assess affordable housing and community development needs and market conditions, and to make data-driven, place-based investment decisions in regards to the use of CDBG entitlement grant funds and other resources available within the community," said Community Development Director Vicki Georgeau. The Consolidated Plan update involves public input and community consultation, review by the Human Services Board and approval by City Council. The schedule shown to the right will be followed for the development of the Consolidated Plan and the 2016-17 Annual Action Plan.

A public hearing will be held on Thursday, January 21, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. in Conference Room #1, City Hall. During

2016-2020 Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan Update Schedule										
Event	Sept '15	Oct '15	Nov '15	Dec '15	Jan '16	Feb '16	Mar '16	Apr '16	May '16	July '16
Citizen participation plan										
Data collection and community consultation										
Complete draft of community needs assessment										
Public notice & <i>Portager</i> article regarding public hearing										
Public hearing on community needs assessment (1/21/16)										
Complete draft of Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan										
Provide draft of Plans to Human Services Board										
30-day public comment period and public hearing (4/7/16)										
City Council approval of Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan (5/10/16)										
Submit Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plans to HUD										
Begin new grant year										

the hearing, the Human Services Board will review the results of the Housing Needs Assessment and Market Analysis. For more information regarding the City of Portage CDBG Program and the Consolidated Plan, please feel free to contact the Department of Community

Development at 329-4477 or visit the Consolidated Plan page on the city website at www.portagemi.gov > Departments > Community Development > Planning, Development and Neighborhood Services > CDBG Program Consolidated Plan.



Portage 2025 Visioning Renewal Event Produces a Framework for the Future

In October 2015, a broad representation of Portage residents and interested citizens joined together for the **Portage 2025 – Visioning Renewal Event**. During this event, community members reviewed and renewed past efforts to plan for the future of Portage.

In 2007 a series of **Portage 2025** community forums resulted in a core vision for the City of Portage in the year 2025 and established related visions and goals in seven key areas: Culture & Leisure; Economic Development; Environment & Natural Resources; Human Services; Municipal Services; Neighborhoods and Transportation. In 2008, a **Renewal Event** was held to prioritize top goals and develop implementation strategies. During the 2008 Renewal Event, participants also developed preliminary concepts for a collective vision of the Portage City Centre area.

During the most recent **Portage 2025 - Visioning Renewal Event** held on October 3, 2015 at Portage Central High School, participants were presented with information regarding community accomplishments, changing demographics new trends and concepts in development since the 2007 and 2008 visioning efforts. Participants used the balance of their Saturday morning reflecting upon the information presented while collaborating with fellow citizens to develop revised visions, top goals and strategies for achieving the contemplated future of Portage in 2025.

The **Portage 2025 Renewal Event Final Report** is a documentation of the October 3, 2015 renewal event. This report represents the framework for the future of the City of Portage and will serve as the basis for future planning strategies (Council Goals and Objectives, Fiscal Year Budget, Ten-Year Capital Improvement Program, etc.).

In consideration of the goals established and affirmed by the Portage 2025 Renewal Event participants, this final report be at the forefront of the discussion during the upcoming January 22, 2016 City Council Goal Setting Session. Furthermore, the City Administration will seek to implement the goals and strategies identified by Portage 2025 participants. The Portage 2025 Renewal Event Final Report and a video of the event can be viewed at www.portagemi.gov - click on the Portage 2025 logo.



The Transportation work group discusses goals and strategies during the Portage 2025 Renewal Event on October 3, 2015.

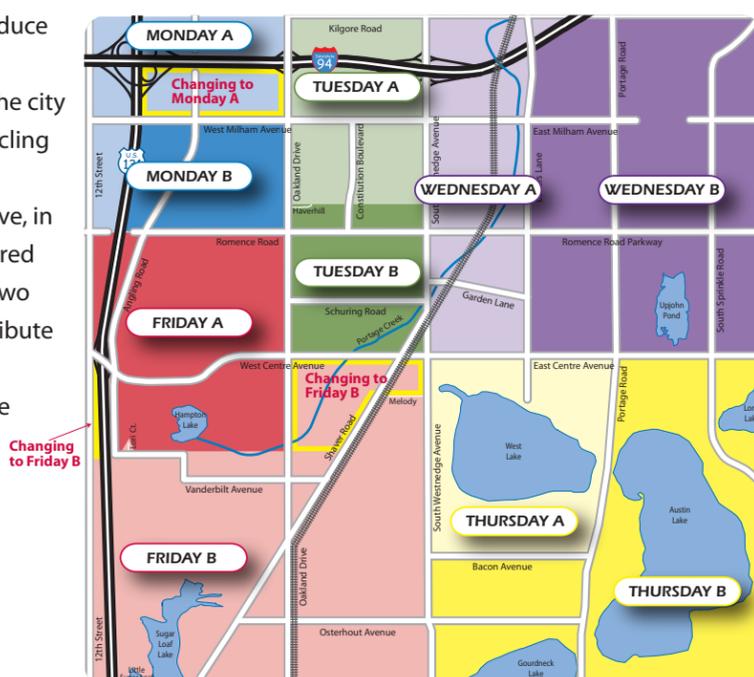
Single Stream Curbside Recycling Program a Big Hit!

The City of Portage supports the goal to reduce and recycle waste through the residential Curbside Recycling Program. To this end, the city launched the Single-Stream Curbside Recycling Program in October. The response from Portagers has been very positive. So positive, in fact, that nearly 11,500 homes have registered to participate in the program. As a result, two route changes are necessary to better distribute the number of stops across the collection days (see map). Residents affected by these route changes will receive a letter with detailed information and a new collection calendar.

Sign me up!

To participate in the Single-Stream Curbside Recycling Program, please log on to the city website and submit your request through the online form located at www.portagemi.gov > Departments > Public Services > Curbside Recycling Program or contact the City of Portage Recycling Hotline at 329-4416. The **Curbside Recycling Guide** provides full details on this popular program and can be viewed at the city website as well.

To order additional carts or a different size cart, please contact the Best Way Disposal Customer Service at 388-3300.



Curbside Brush Collection Underway



The Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection is currently in progress and includes the collection of whole Christmas trees (free of tinsel and ornaments). To ensure the collection of your items, residents are asked to have brush and Christmas trees placed at the curb by 7 a.m. on the Monday of your designated collection week. Materials may be placed at curbside up to, but not more than, 72 hours prior to the designated Monday. If snowfall occurs, residents are asked to please clear snow from brush piles if possible. This will ensure crews are able to find items placed out for collection.

Complete details regarding the Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection Program can be located on the city website at www.portagemi.gov or by contacting the Public Services office at 329-4444.

Note: The Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection Program is not performed for commercial establishments, churches or schools. Collection takes place on private streets where every property owner has signed an indemnification form. Contact the Department of Public Services at 329-4444 regarding collection on private streets.

Get Outdoors and Enjoy These Winter Recreation Programs and Events

Historically, the month of January is the coldest and snowiest month of the year and provides great opportunities for outdoor fun! So, come outdoors and join the nearly 7,000 people who participate in these winter recreation programs sponsored by the Portage Parks and Recreation Division.

Free Recreation Programs!

Snowshoe Nature Hike West Lake Nature Preserve	Saturday, January 16 2 p.m.
Winter Snow Party Oakland Drive Park (see article below)	Saturday, January 30 12 noon - 3 p.m.
Winter Jamboree Milham Park Golf Club	Saturday, February 6 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Snowshoe Nature Hike Schrier Park Bring your Valentine sweetheart!	Sunday, February 14 2 p.m.
Downhill Ski or Snowboard Lessons Timber Ridge Ski Area \$5 pre-registration plus \$60	January 24, 31 & February 7 2 - 3:30 p.m.
Cross Country Ski Class Milham Park Golf Club \$15 per person 8-14 years / \$20 per person 15 years and up	Saturday, February 6 9 - 11 a.m.

Youth Recreation Scholarships are available for these and other recreation programs. Please contact the Portage Community Center at 323-1942 for more information.

The Ice Rink At Millennium Park

280 Romence Road

This unique outdoor refrigerated rink offers a smooth skating surface, warming house, skate rental, skate sharpening and concessions!

Open Skating Hours

January 3 - March 6

Sunday	12 - 9 p.m.
Monday - Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	3 - 9 p.m.
Friday	3 - 10 p.m.
Saturday	11 a.m. - 10 p.m.

School Holidays

January 29 & February 26	2 - 10 p.m.
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Fees

Open skating	\$4
Skate rental	\$3
Skate sharpening	\$3
10-Skate Punch Card	\$25



Special Events at the Ice Rink

Valentine's Skate Date	\$16 / Person
Sunday, February 14 at 4:30 p.m.	Reservations due by February 11 at the Ice Rink
Twilight Skate	\$3 to \$5
Thursday, February 25 from 8 to 11 p.m.	

Ice Conditions and Information Hotline: 324-9200

Winter Snow Party Hosted by the Youth Advisory Committee



Saturday, January 30, 2015 - 12 noon to 3 p.m.
Oakland Drive Park
Admission: FREE!
Cardboard Sled Contest: 1 p.m.
Snowman/Sculpture Building Contest: 1:30 p.m.

A great chance to enjoy time with your family and friends, all while enjoying the white wonders of Michigan weather. There will be many activities to enjoy such as sledding, a snowman/sculpture building contest and a bonfire! Build, decorate and bring your own cardboard sled! Build and dress up the biggest and fanciest snowman/sculpture! Prizes will be awarded for best in show for both contests as well as the fastest cardboard sled! And for when you need a warm respite from the activities, there will be a bonfire and hot chocolate/coffee available for purchase. The event is hosted by the Portage Youth Advisory Committee and all ages are welcome.

2016 Winter Blast Half Marathon, 10k and 5k Registration Open!

www.portagewinterblast.wordpress.com



The City of Portage will host the fourth annual Portage Winter Blast in partnership with the Kalamazoo Area Runners. Runners and spectators alike are invited to join in this extraordinary community celebration of health and wellness! Enjoy the wintery views as runners make their journey on these USAT&F certified courses through the Portage Trail System and along local roads. Post race refreshments, entertainment and awards will be available at the Portage Central High School commons area.

The start/finish line will be at Portage Central High School with parking is available at Portage Central Middle and Elementary Schools, Portage Community Center, Portage District Library and Portage City Hall.

For more information or to volunteer for this event, please visit the website listed above.



A runner receives congratulations at the finish line.

What's Happening at the Portage Senior Center

Evening Meals at the Portage Senior Center

The Evening Meal returns on Tuesday, January 19, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. This event is open to the public, and participants can also request their meals "to go" when making their reservation(s). Reservations are required no later than one day prior to the meal. These dinners are available for \$10.00. Meal includes entrée, sides, dessert and beverage. January's entrée will be Salisbury Steak.

Super Books Fundraiser

The Portage Senior Center will be selling Super Books. Books are \$40 each and are full of money-saving deals at businesses throughout the community. Funds raised support programs and events at the PSC. Stop in to the Senior Center to purchase yours today.

It's in the Bag!

The "It's in the Bag!" purse sale will return in 2016! The Friends of the Portage Senior Center are currently

seeking donations of "gently used" handbags, jewelry and scarves. Start your spring cleaning early by cleaning out your closet and donating items to the Portage Senior Center. Donations can be dropped off any time before April 1, 2016. The "It's in the Bag!" sale will be on Saturday, April 16.

The mission of the Portage Senior Center is to provide, with the help of its members, information and a range of services, activities and volunteer opportunities that promote personal growth, health, friendship and independence for area persons over the age of 50.

The Center, located at 320 Library Lane in the heart of Portage, is conveniently near Portage City Hall, senior housing and the Portage District Library. The Center is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. For more information about these programs or the Portage Senior Center, please call 329-4555.

Get Involved in Your Community!

We need you! Interested in serving your community and getting involved? 2016 is a big year for elections and the City of Portage is currently seeking poll workers. Any registered voter in the State of Michigan is encouraged to apply. Training is provided and election workers are compensated \$15 for each training session and \$120 for working Election Day. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact the Department of Human Resources at 329-4533.



PORTAGEALERT

Have You Signed Up Yet?

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 is also a great way for the city to remind you of upcoming service dates in your neighborhood, like leaf pickup or brush collection.

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.



Friendly Winter Reminders

Winter Overnight On-Street Parking Restrictions

The City of Portage has a winter parking ordinance that is in effect from November 1 through April 15 of each year. The ordinance states that it is unlawful for any person to park, allow to be parked or allow to remain standing, any motor vehicle within five feet of the main traveled portion of the roadway between the hours of 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. local time. This restriction is in effect whether or not there is snow present. The City of Portage recommends that in times outside those



restrictions when snow is present, residents make an effort to not park on the street if at all possible. This ensures that city snow removal equipment can complete the snow clearing process as rapidly and effectively as possible.

Sidewalks

Public sidewalks adjacent to all types of property (residential, commercial, etc.) provide safe routes to schools, bus stops and other important destinations. City Code requires all sidewalks to be cleared of snow and ice throughout the winter season. To ensure sidewalks are accessible, a minimum clearance width of



three feet is recommended. Special attention to sidewalks adjacent to street corners is requested to ensure snow banks do not obstruct access to and from the sidewalk.

Fire Hydrants

The Portage Fire Division requests property owners to clear snow away from any fire hydrants on or adjacent to their property. Should there be a fire nearby, it is imperative that firefighters have clear access to fire hydrants so that fire hoses can be immediately attached and used to fight the fire.

We know that it can be challenging to keep up with winter maintenance, however, good property stewardship is appreciated by the City of Portage and your fellow neighbors as well. If you become aware of a neighbor who might need assistance with property maintenance this winter, lend a hand if you are able.



7900 South Westnedge Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002-5160

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City Council Selects Nasim Ansari as Mayor Pro Tem

At its Organizational Meeting on November 17, 2015, the City Council selected Councilmember Nasim Ansari as the Mayor Pro Tem for the 2015-2017 term. "Congratulations to Mayor Pro Tem Ansari," said City Manager Larry Shaffer. "The confidence that the Council has placed in him well-deserved."

By City Charter, the Mayor Pro Tem acts as the Mayor when the Mayor is absent or unable to perform the duties of the office, such as conducting Council meetings and acting as the presiding officer of the Council. In the event that a vacancy should occur, the Mayor Pro Tem would fill that vacancy until the Council votes to appoint an elected member of the Council.

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!



Mayor Peter J. Strazdas
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Mayor Pro Tem Nasim Ansari
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Laurence Shaffer, City Manager
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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.



JANUARY

- 7 7:00 p.m. Planning Commission Meeting
- 12 7:30 p.m. City Council Meeting
- 14 7:00 p.m. Planning Commission Meeting
- 26 7:30 p.m. City Council Meeting