



7900 South Westnedge Avenue
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Wanted! Citizen Input on the 2017-2027 Capital Improvement Program

During the month of September, the City of Portage will launch the annual update of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP is a 10-year financing plan that identifies both short and long-range physical development and capital investments:

- ◆ Major and local streets, including non-motorized transportation.
- ◆ Municipal water, sanitary sewer and storm drainage facilities.
- ◆ Parks, bikeways and multi-use trails.
- ◆ Technology and Public facilities, such as City Hall, Senior Center, Public Services.
- ◆ Department of Public Safety facilities, vehicles and equipment.

The CIP is an important implementation tool for various City of Portage planning efforts:

- ◆ The 2014 Comprehensive Plan, which addresses long term goals and needs pertaining to land use, the transportation network, recreation and open space, natural/cultural resources, economy and market place, utility infrastructure and community facilities.
- ◆ Strategic plan studies such as the 2015 Wellhead Protection Plan, 2013 Water Reliability Study and Storm Water Design Criteria Manual.

- ◆ Periodic municipal facility audits, annual reports (utility operation and maintenance reports, annual traffic count and signal studies) and citizen surveys.

Input from Portage residents, business owners and other interested persons is critical to the development of the program. A community-supported CIP helps ensure that decisions made on capital investments will maintain and enhance the community.

To garner public input and encourage citizen engagement, an Open House will be held on **Thursday, September 29, 2016 from 4 to 7 p.m.** at Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. The purpose of the Open House is to gather initial public comments about future capital improvement projects in the city. Stop by to learn about the CIP process, proposed municipal projects and interact with city staff to review preliminary concepts, ask questions and provide important feedback into the process. Your participation is important!

In addition to the Open House, an on-line survey will be available during the month of September 2016. Submit ideas for capital improvement projects or provide feedback on projects already in the planning stages.

Have an idea for a project to improve your neighborhood? Come tell us about it!

The Portage Planning Commission wants your input on a new project designed to support neighborhood and community enhancements such as sidewalks, street trees, gateway signage, streetlights and traffic calming techniques.



To complete the survey or learn more about the planning process, proposed projects and investments, please visit www.portagemi.gov and click the CIP icon. For more information, please contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4477.

What is a Safe Distance to Pass a Bicyclist?

In the wake of the bicycle tragedy in Kalamazoo this summer, in which five cyclists were killed and four were seriously injured, bicycle safety proponents have been urging lawmakers to enact what are referred to as "safe passing laws." A safe passing law would require a vehicle passing a bicycle to allow a certain distance between the vehicle and the bicycle. Safe passing laws that specifically reference bicycles have been enacted in 28 states and the District of Columbia where the minimum distance for safe passing is defined as three feet or more. The State of Michigan does not have a safe passing law; however, House Bill 5003, which would require five feet of distance when passing bicycles, was introduced in the Michigan Legislature in October 2015.



In the absence of a state law, several Michigan cities are taking matters into their own hands. In the City of Grand Rapids, a safe passing law requiring five feet of distance between a vehicle and bicycle was approved in September 2015 and the City of Battle Creek adopted an ordinance requiring 3 feet of distance in February 2016. A three-foot safe passing law is currently being considered in the City of Kalamazoo. The Portage City Administration has teamed up with members of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club to examine existing safe passing laws, including what safety advocates say is an adequate distance. "We are grateful to the City Manager and other city staff who are working with the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club to make Portage a safe and enjoyable place for all residents," said Terry Butcher, Ride Captain for the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club.

In the meantime, drivers are encouraged to be extra attentive to cyclists and pedestrians on the roadways. Don't pass a cyclist unless you can do so safely. Let's work together to make Portage a safe place for all travelers!

Portage Senior Center Helping Older Adults Master Aging

The Portage Senior Center is the first in Kalamazoo County to offer an innovative new ten-week health and wellness program to residents 50 and over. The Aging Mastery Program® (AMP) was developed by the National Council on Aging (NCOA) and has been successful at helping older adults build their own playbook for aging well. This is a wonderful opportunity for older adults to experience and reap the benefits of this cutting-edge program.

The PSC is recruiting 30 adults, ages 50+ to participate in the ten-week educational program. AMP is a fun, innovative and person-centered education program that empowers participants to embrace their gift of longevity by spending more time each day doing things that are good for themselves and for others. The program encourages mastery – developing sustainable behaviors across many dimensions that lead to improved health, stronger economic security, enhanced well-being and increased societal participation.

An informational meeting will be held on Thursday, October 6 at 4 p.m. at the Portage Senior Center, located at 320 Library Lane. If this program piques your interest and you'd like to learn more, please call the Portage Senior Center at 329-4555 or stop by the informational meeting on October 6!



Parks & Recreation Department Moving Back to City Hall

On Tuesday, September 6 the Parks & Recreation Department will return to City Hall. The department is growing and working very hard to provide the best recreational programs and park experience possible! The move will allow the department to focus even more on the quality of life amenities and recreation activities the citizens of Portage expect. Please contact the Parks & Recreation Department at 329-5422 with any questions.

Back-to-School Safety Tips

As summer ends and back-to-school season begins, don't become so preoccupied with class schedules and school supplies that you forget about the safety of your student. No matter how a student chooses to travel to school – walking, bicycling, driving or school bus – being prepared is crucial.

Walkers & Bikers

Students should walk or bike with a parent, a trusted adult, a friend or in a group.



Make sure your student knows the safe route to school (www.portageps.org > Departments > Transportation) and advise students to not take shortcuts. Bright, visible clothing should be worn or place reflective strips on backpacks or shoes. Students should know what to do if

confronted by a stranger and to never get into a vehicle with someone who is not well-known; consider creating a code word that only a trusted person would know. When bicycling, the student should know and follow the rules of the road. Make sure the bike is in good working order, including working brakes, reflectors and a light or flashing signal. Bicyclists should always wear a helmet.

Drivers

With the beginning of the school year comes an increase in traffic accidents for young adults. Not only are they the most inexperienced drivers, but they often can be distracted. The number one distraction for teens is a cell phone. Consider asking your teen driver to sign a pledge to not use a cell phone or text while driving. Remind your student to keep her or his hands on the wheel and eyes on the road while in motion. Drivers must be extra cautious on

the routes to school, as many other students will be walking and biking in the area. Finally, always wear a safety belt.



School Bus Safety

When a bus activates its yellow flashing lights, drivers must prepare to stop (just like a yellow traffic signal). Then, stop at least 20 feet away from the bus when red lights are flashing, unless driving in the opposite direction on a divided roadway. Students on a bus should always stay in sight of the bus driver. When exiting the bus, students should take their time, check for traffic then exit safely. When crossing the road, students are safest when they cross in front of the bus, not behind.

Generation Celebration!

Meet up with your neighbors and friends on Sunday, September 11 from 1 to 3 p.m. for the first-ever "Generation Celebration!" This free special event is designed to get grandparents, grandchildren and the rest of the family outside moving, having fun and learning about resources available to older adults in the Portage community.



September 11 also happens to be Grandparent's Day, but you don't need to be a grandparent to celebrate with us. This is for boomers, millennials, elders and youngsters alike! Start out at the Portage Farmers Market at the Portage Senior Center to find tasty food and other items from local farmers and vendors. Then head out and tour the Bicentennial trail, from the

Portage Senior Center to Celery Flats. Along the way, there will be stations featuring family-friendly events like crafts, games, music, popcorn and a few surprise entertainers!

Generation Celebration is sure to be fun for all ages because healthy aging not only involves physical activity and healthy eating, but also the joy that comes from interacting with people while discovering new things. This event is brought to you by the Portage Senior Center, in partnership with the Healthy Aging Committee of Celebrate Elderhood.* For more information, contact Portage Senior Center at 329-4555.

*The Celebrate Elderhood initiative seeks to bring attention to the issues of aging, challenging misconceptions and showcasing how this stage of the lifecycle enriches individuals, families and the community.

The City of Portage Parks & Recreation Department will host two Pokémon-themed events in September!



Join us from 1 - 4 p.m. at West Lake Nature Preserve on **Saturday, September 10** for a Pokémon Scavenger hunt on the preserve trails, Pokémon chalk drawings and great food from local food trucks! Then, visit Celery Flats on **Sunday, September 11**, in conjunction with Generation Celebration, for face paintings, Pokémon chalk drawings, prizes and much more! Both locations are filled with Pokémon Go stops and gyms!

We will continue adding more exciting activities to these events, so follow us on Facebook (Portage MI Department of Parks & Recreation) for more details, or visit our website at www.portagemi.gov.

Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection Set for October

The next Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection will begin October 3, 2016. To ensure the collection of items, residents are asked to have brush placed at the curb by 7 a.m. on the Monday of the designated collection week. For the safety of the public, please do not place brush out more than 72 hours prior to the start of your collection week. The map indicates the pickup schedule of each brush collection zone.

Crews make every effort to minimize lawn damage resulting from the use of heavy equipment for the collection process. To assist crews and avoid potential damage to lawns, residents are asked to please move brush to the edge of the curb on the Monday of your collection week. Brush may also be placed directly onto the street, but must NOT obstruct traffic or pedestrian use of the roadway. A small amount of debris may be left after the brush is removed; citizens are asked to assist with the clean up of leftover debris.

- ◆ Brush and branches may be any length.
- ◆ Branches must be less than 3 inches in diameter.
- ◆ Please stack brush/branches in neat piles at the curbside by 7 a.m. on the designated Monday; each zone will be cleared of materials by the end of the designated week.



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.

Portable Basketball Stands Impede Safe Collection Efforts

The Portage Code of Ordinances (Chapter 66, Article 1, Section 66-2) prohibits residents from placing objects in the city right-of-way. The city right-of-way is defined as the area between the curb and sidewalk or, for those without sidewalks, the area 33 feet from the center of the roadway. Items such as portable basketball stands impede safe collection operations and can result in damage to city equipment and personal property.



The Department of Public Services requests the removal of basketball stands from all city right-of-way areas to allow city crews the opportunity to provide brush and leaf removal services without the possibility of damaging collection equipment or the basketball hoop itself. A safe distance to permanently position the basketball stand on your property is 33 feet (or more) from the center of the roadway. Likewise, during trash and recycling collection days, citizens are asked to keep their containers on the curb versus on the actual roadway. The cooperation of Portage residents is appreciated. Should you have any questions or concerns with this request, please contact the Department of Public Services at 329-4444.

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

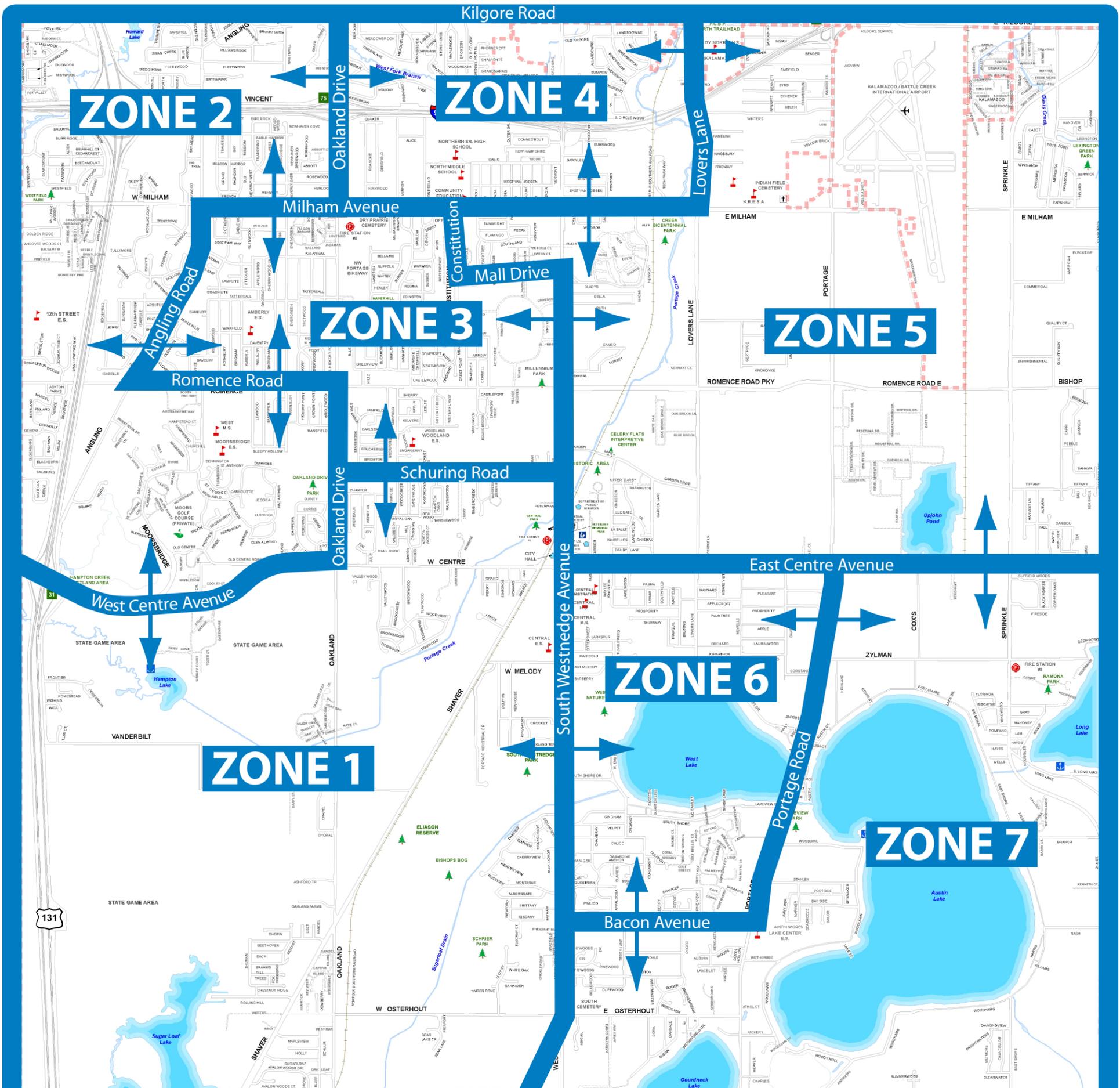
2016 Neighborhood Fall Leaf Pickup Schedule

October 24 through December 1, 2016

Please review the program requirements carefully. Information is also available on the city website at www.portagemi.gov – click on the fall leaf pickup icon. ONLY loose leaves or leaves bagged in biodegradable paper yard waste bags will be collected.

- ◆ Leaf collection will occur three times in each neighborhood zone or until prohibited by weather. Residents are asked to place leaves at the curb by 7 a.m. on each of the three collection dates shown on the map.
- ◆ For the safety of the public, please do not put leaves in the street more than three days prior to your scheduled collection.
- ◆ Leaves should be raked off the grass and into the street or bagged in biodegradable paper yard waste bags and placed next to the curb as close to the street edge as possible so as to not obstruct traffic. Equipment may damage lawns if leaves are left in grass areas or ditches.
- ◆ The Fall Leaf Pickup Program is separate from the Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection Program (see article on previous page). Please ensure that brush and leaf piles are placed in separate locations at the curb.
- ◆ Leaves in plastic bags (including biodegradable plastic bags) WILL NOT be collected.
- ◆ Streets will be swept following each neighborhood collection, weather permitting.
- ◆ The Fall Leaf Pickup Program is not performed for commercial establishments, churches or schools or on private streets (unless every property owner on a private street has signed an indemnification form. Please contact the Department of Public Services at 329-4444 with any questions).
- ◆ The Portage Code of Ordinances (Chapter 66, Article 1, Section 66-2) prohibits residents from having basketball stands in the city right-of-way (see article on previous page). Likewise, during trash and recycling removal days, citizens are requested to keep their containers on the curb versus on the actual roadway. These items impede safe leaf collection operations and can result in damage to city equipment and personal property.
- ◆ If weather prohibits raking of leaves, the city offers a spring bagged leaf pickup in April 2017, along with the scheduled brush pickup.

Zone	1st Collection	2nd Collection	3rd Collection
1	Monday, October 24	Monday, November 7	Monday, November 21
2	Tuesday, October 25	Tuesday, November 8	Tuesday, November 22
3	Wednesday, October 26	Wednesday, November 9	Wednesday, November 23
4	Thursday, October 27	Thursday, November 10	Monday, November 28
5	Friday, October 28	Friday, November 11	Tuesday, November 29
6	Monday, October 31	Monday, November 14	Wednesday, November 30
7	Tuesday, November 1	Tuesday, November 15	Thursday, December 1



Burning of leaves and brush is banned in the City of Portage! There is NO burn period. Questions? Call the Department of Public Services at 329-4444 or visit www.portagemi.gov.

2016 Summer Property Tax Bills

Payment for the 2016 summer property tax bills is due by 5 p.m. on September 14, 2016. Property owners who have not received a bill or have misplaced it, are encouraged to view tax information at www.portagemi.gov > [Quick Links](#) > [Property Information](#) then click the [Launch the Property and Tax Lookup Site](#) button.

Payment for property taxes can be made at the Treasury Office in City Hall in the form of cash, check, money order or credit/debit card. The Treasury Office is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the exception of Friday, September 2 (see City Closings article below) and Labor Day on September 5, 2016. To pay with a credit card by phone, call 1-866-270-5701 or pay online at www.portagemi.gov > [Quick Links](#) > [Online Payments](#).

Payment by check authorizes the city to convert the check to an electronic funds transfer; the bank account may be debited as soon as the same day the city receives the check payment. Payments made by credit/debit card will include a 3% convenience fee, which is charged by the vendor (Point&Pay).

All tax payments received or postmarked after September 14, 2016 will be charged a 3% late fee on the outstanding amount. To avoid the late fee, mailed payments must be postmarked by the post office on or before September 14, 2016 and received by the Treasury Office before September 21, 2016. In all late payment disputes, the Treasury Office will rely on the postmark applied by the Postmaster. Taxes that remain unpaid on March 1, 2017 will be turned over to the Kalamazoo County Treasurer for collection where additional fees will be added.

Any questions regarding property tax bills or payment methods may be directed to staff in the Treasury Office at 329-4455.

November General Election Notes

Special Information for First Time Voters

With numerous voter registration drives occurring across Michigan and the nation, the Office of the City Clerk is experiencing an increase in the number of registrations for first time voters. If you have never voted in Michigan and registered to vote by mail or as part of a voter registration drive, such as those sponsored by a political campaign or private organization, you must appear in person to vote in the first election in which you wish to participate. This requirement does not apply if:

- ◆ You personally hand deliver the voter registration form to the City Clerk instead of mailing the form.
- ◆ You are 60 years of age or more.
- ◆ You have a recognized disability.
- ◆ You are eligible to vote under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.

Serve the Portage Community as an Election Worker!

The City of Portage is seeking registered voters in the State of Michigan with at least basic computer skills to serve as election workers on November 11. Training is provided. Election workers are compensated \$15 for each training session and \$120 for working Election Day. If you have any questions please contact the Department of Human Resources at 329-4533. An Election Worker application can be downloaded online at www.portagemi.gov or is available in the Department of Human Resources, City of Portage, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact the Office of the City Clerk at 329-4511.

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, human services, the environment and senior citizen activities. Specifically, City Council will be making appointments and/or reappointments to the Environmental Board, Historic District Commission, Human Services Board, Park Board, Senior Citizen Advisory Board and Economic Development Corporation/Tax Increment Financing Authority and Brownfield Redevelopment Authority.

The meeting times and responsibilities of each of the Boards and/or Commissions varies and can be obtained along with an application form at www.portagemi.gov > [Boards & Commissions](#), by contacting the Office of the City Clerk by mail, in person at City Hall, or by calling 329-4412. 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 19 for interviews with City Council on October 4.



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Portage, Michigan 49002-5160

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City Closings

All City of Portage non-emergency offices will be **closed on Friday, September 2** so that employees can attend a city-wide training session.

City offices will also be **closed in observance of Labor Day on Monday, September 5.**

The next edition of the *Portager* will be published in October 2016

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

City Council and Planning Commission meetings can be viewed live on channel 190 while Zoning Board of Appeals meetings can be viewed live on channel 187. All meetings can be viewed via live streaming at <http://www.publicmedianet.org/watch-live>.

AT&T U-Verse customers can access City of Portage government meetings on channel 99 and then follow the prompts to access the various meetings.



September

- 1 7:00 p.m. Planning Commission Meeting
- 6 7:30 p.m. City Council Meeting
- 12 7:00 p.m. Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
- 15 7:00 p.m. Planning Commission Meeting
- 20 7:30 p.m. City Council Meeting