



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 21, 2020

Contact: Joseph S. La Margo
City Manager
(269) 329-4400

UM-Dearborn's iLabs' eCities Research Recognizes the City Of Portage for Supporting Business in the Community

The City of Portage has been recognized for its successes and efforts in contributing to Michigan's entrepreneurial growth and economic development in the [annual eCities study](#) conducted by researchers at iLabs, University of Michigan-Dearborn's Center for Innovation Research.

Portage was honored as a four-star community along with 94 other communities across the state. "We are thrilled to be in such good company with the likes of Auburn Hills, Kalamazoo and Traverse City," said City Manager Joe La Margo. "The city has taken a progressive approach to economic development by providing unique development opportunities for business and industry to grow."

The City of Portage prides itself on providing valuable resources and services to support local business development and entrepreneurial growth. On average, the city invests \$15 million annually in the public infrastructure improvements, including quality of life amenities, necessary to support economic growth. The city also offers direct financial incentives to eligible businesses and to facilitate speed to permitting, the Department of Community Development is a one-stop-shop for all business development needs. Property/business owners enjoy a low municipal tax rate (with no increase for four consecutive years) and low water and sewer rates. The City of Portage has a highly skilled workforce to support current and future business and industry. Nearly 96% of Portage residents have a high school diploma and more than 44% have a college degree. Taken together, these elements foster an exceptional environment for business start-ups and economic growth.

The [2020 eCities study](#) analyzed publicly available data from 277 communities from 54 counties in Michigan. Researchers focused on the five-year changes in property values, community assets, and tax rates, which can demonstrate the growth, investments, and cost of doing business within the community. For example, over the five-year period of 2015-2019, these communities increased their capital assets by an average of 2.4 percent per year by investments such as library equipment, building, water, and sewage improvements, and street renovations, while property tax rates increased by less than 1 percent on average per year.

Although accounting for less than 20 percent of the State's cities and townships, the 277 communities analyzed are home to 70 percent of Michigan's population and 87 percent of the state's commercial property. "Each year, the eCities project aims to highlight the successes and continued commitment of cities and townships to grow business and support entrepreneurship within their communities," said Kari Kowalski, iLabs project manager.

#####