

The City of Portage, Michigan
invites your interest in the position of

CITY MANAGER



About Portage

Portage offers its citizens a dynamic living environment, energized and sustained quality of life.

Vibrant City, Sustained Quality

Portage has shown itself to be the municipal equal to a renewable resource. The city offers its citizens a dynamic living environment, energized and sustained by quality of life characteristics that are unmatched in the region, punctuated with great retail, and enriched by a unique pledge to share the natural environment with its citizens.

Excellent Living

Portage residents enjoy affordable housing with low taxes, safe and well-maintained neighborhoods, world-class healthcare, enriching activities and entertainment, and a unique parks system that connects citizens to each other and the natural world.

Rewarding Future

Portage has a great past and its citizens anticipate a rewarding future for their children and grandchildren. The people of Portage have a character and willingness to make our city a special place to live, work and play. The city continuously engages its citizens to address current challenges and develop a future vision for our community – and ultimately ensure the city remains *A Natural Place to Move*.



Quality of Life

More than 49,000 people call Portage home. Residents enjoy a low municipal tax rate that remains in the lower 25% of similar-sized Michigan cities. The city offers diverse and affordable housing opportunities, with steadily increasing property values. Portage has more than 55 miles of extensive bikeways and trails, connecting citizens to retail and cultural resources and bringing neighbors and neighborhoods together. World-class healthcare is delivered to Portage residents by Bronson Healthcare, Ascension Borgess and several independent medical groups.

More than 2,000 acres of park and recreational and open space are ready to be explored in Portage. The city maintains 19 parks, including Ramona Park Beach, a life-guarded public swimming area; the Celery Flats Historical Area; Overlander Bandshell; the four-mile Portage Creek Bicentennial Trail; the Ice Rink at Millennium Park, the area's only outdoor refrigerated ice rink and several neighborhood parks.



Portage Public Schools (portageps.org) educates approximately 8,700 students at eight elementary, three middle and three high schools, and an early childhood program. PPS offers several prestigious learning programs, including the International Baccalaureate program, the Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center, Education for Employment and Education for the Arts in partnership with the Kalamazoo Regional Educational

Service Agency (kresa.org), the Academically Talented Youth Program in partnership with Western Michigan University (wmu.edu) and the Early-Middle College program in partnership with Kalamazoo Valley Community College (kvcc.edu). The Portage community approved a \$144 million bond in 2016 to include construction of two new middle schools, renovation of one middle school, athletic facilities and pools at the two high schools, technology upgrades district wide and replacement of aging school buses.

Portage owns 20 water production wells located throughout the city. The Garden Lane Water Treatment Facility removes arsenic from the groundwater before distribution to the public water system. The water is tested daily to ensure the highest quality drinking water is delivered to Portage residents. Portage utility customers enjoy affordable utility rates, which decreased in 2018 and 2019.

Business Environment

The City of Portage is strategically located halfway between Detroit and Chicago and at the crossroads of two major highways – I-94 and US 131. Its location offers convenient access to the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport and an Amtrak train station, with Metro Transit providing public transportation services. Portage serves as the economic engine of Kalamazoo County and is home to two global companies and major employers, Stryker and Pfizer (currently undergoing \$245 million and \$450 million expansion projects, respectively). The workforce in Portage is highly educated, with 43.1% of residents 25 years or older having a bachelor's degree or higher and the unemployment rate is currently 3.1%, below the state and national levels.

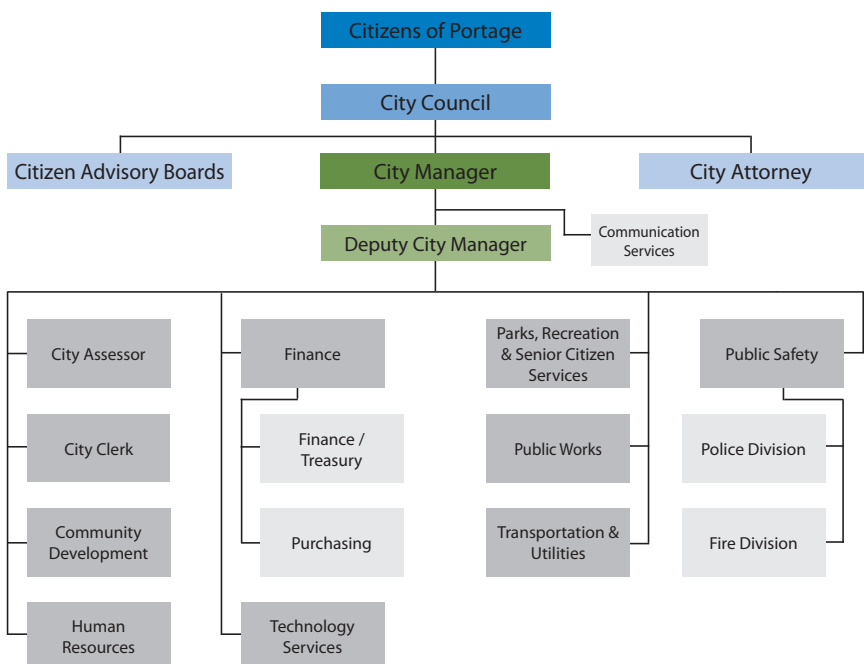


Portage offers a business-friendly environment with modern and extensive infrastructure. The city attracts new businesses, existing business expansion and innovative redevelopment projects by offering a variety of business incentives. South Westnedge Avenue, a significant retail shopping destination in the area, features The Crossroads Mall, the Southland Shopping Center and a large assortment of national and local retailers. The Lake Center District and secondary shopping nodes throughout the city offer a wide variety of shopping, dining and consumer services.

Government

Established in 1963, the City of Portage is a professional and experienced government service that operates with a Council/Manager form of government. The Mayor and Councilmembers, elected at-large, serve as the policy-making arm of the city. The City Manager is appointed by the City Council to handle the day-to-day administrative duties of the city. The City Manager makes recommendations to the City Council as a group and the Council acts on business at twice monthly meetings (usually the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month) at 7 PM.

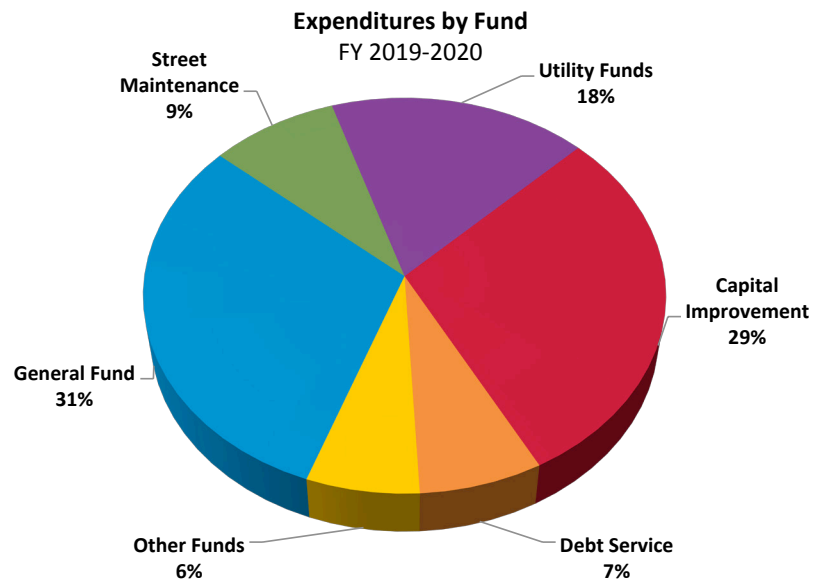
Organizational Chart



The Portage City Council consists of a Mayor and six Councilmembers (non-partisan). Councilmembers are elected to four-year terms, staggered every two years (three Councilmembers are elected every two years). The Mayor is elected every two years and is the presiding officer of the Council. The Council is responsible for adopting and amending city ordinances, determining city policies and approving contracts for goods and services. The Council also authorizes the annual city budget, which runs on a fiscal year (July 1 - June 30) and determines the city tax millage and utility rates.

The City Manager is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the City Council. She or he advises the Council and makes recommendations on matters related to the operation of the city including the responsibility for overseeing all departments and staff. The City Manager prepares the agenda for each City Council meeting and provides the Council with all necessary documentation regarding each order of business.

The annual budget is prepared and presented to the City Council by the City Manager, along with the Capital Improvement Program, which provides the city with direction for the future. The City of Portage FY 2019-2020 budget totals approximately \$84.9 million and includes the third consecutive annual millage reduction. The city has reduced its debt from \$105.2 million in 2008 to \$55.5 million in 2019, down 47% over 11 years and Standard & Poor's reaffirmed the city's credit rating of AA+ in May 2019. With a Total Taxable Assessed Value of \$2.193 billion, Portage is the municipality with the largest tax base in Kalamazoo County.



As the administrative head of the government, the City Manager appoints all department heads. Portage provides a full array of municipal services from ten departments: City Assessor, City Clerk, Community Development, Finance & Purchasing, Human Resources, Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizen Services, Public Safety (Police & Fire), Public Works, Technology Services and Transportation & Utilities. The city employs nearly 200 full-time city employees who have an average of more than ten years of service, along with more than 53 part-time and seasonal employees. Portage employees are committed to providing exceptional customer service and attend annual customer service training and a regional diversity / inclusion presentation.



Awards & Recognitions

Year after year, the City of Portage is recognized for excellence in areas such as public safety, innovative use of technology, financial planning and budgeting, public works projects, parks and recreation programs, public communications and other areas of public service.

- » AA+ Bond Rating by Standard and Poor's in 2017 (affirmed in 2018).
- » Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from Government Finance Officers Association for the 2018 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.
- » Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association for the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 City Budget.
- » Perfect Score from the Michigan State Tax Commission for the 2018 Audit of Minimum Assessing Requirements (AMAR) Review.
- » 2017 Project of the Year Public Works for Greater than \$5 Million from the American Public Works Association Michigan Southwest Branch for the Stryker Way road construction project.
- » 2018 Surveying Merit Award from the American Council of Engineering Companies for the Local Streets Reconstruction (use of drones for surveying).
- » 2016 Innovation Idea from the American Public Works Association Midwest Region for the Snow Plow Rodeo program.
- » 2015 Award of Distinction from the Communicator Awards for MI.Portage App Mobile application.
- » 2015 Award of Distinction from the Communicator Awards for the website Media Center.
- » Accreditation from the National Institute of Senior Centers. Original accreditation received in 2011, re-accredited in 2016.
- » Accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. Original accreditation received in 2013, re-accredited in 2015 and 2018.
- » Accreditation from the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission in 2018.
- » Accreditation from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International in 2015.



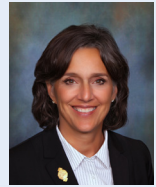
Forward Focus - Perspectives from the Council

The following is a list of thoughts, issues and opportunities provided by the Portage City Council:

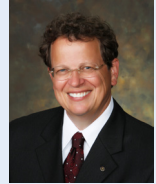
- » The City Council is seeking bold leadership with vision:
 - An individual confident to lead not only the City of Portage, but provide leadership at the county level.
 - An individual who will interface with the City Council and be a presence in the community, delegating the organizational administrative functions to the Deputy City Manager.
 - An individual with a strong background in community and economic development, with experience in revitalization of properties, commercial districts, brownfields, neighborhoods, etc.
- » The City of Portage is in sound financial condition, with a fully-funded retirement system and no “legacy” retirement or healthcare liabilities. The Council desires strong fiscal management and a plan for continued debt reduction, while maintaining the current high level of city services.
- » Notwithstanding the city’s current solid tax base, as well as strength in the commercial and residential sectors, there is a need for focus on development and place-making with a view to making the city attractive and sustainable for all ages and businesses to include emphasis on:
 - Redevelopment and revitalization in certain commercial corridors. The city’s indoor mall (The Crossroads) and retail corridor (South Westnedge Avenue) are experiencing challenging operating environments, consistent with the broader retail sector. Commercial property in certain markets may be underutilized and may represent opportunities for redevelopment.
 - Innovative development tools and strategies. New development opportunities may be limited as the city has fewer areas of undeveloped parcels.
 - Creation of a business-friendly, accessible environment for small and entrepreneurial businesses, both existing and new.
 - Continued diversification of the city’s tax base.
 - Continued diversification of housing options. Although the cost of living is generally reasonable, housing affordability continues to be a challenge for low-income households in Portage.
 - Enhanced environmental standards in development and construction.

»

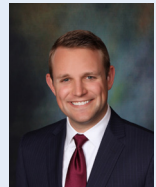
Mayor
Patricia Randall



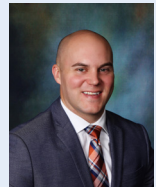
Mayor Pro Tem
Jim Pearson



Councilmember
Chris Burns



Councilmember
Richard Ford



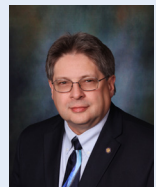
Councilmember
Lori Knapp



Councilmember
Claudette Reid



Councilmember
Terry Urban



- » The current five-year Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2014 and requires a review and update in FY 2019-2020. The Comprehensive Plan acts as a foundation for developing and executing strategic priorities for the next five years is paramount.
- » The city has excellent parks and recreational facilities and is known across the region for its linear Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Trail. Additional connection of the city's trail system to other regional trails, improving non-motorized transportation routes, is vital.
- » The city has plentiful groundwater resources; however, groundwater levels in the region have risen meaningfully, which is causing flooding concerns in certain Portage neighborhoods. Stormwater causes street flooding on certain neighborhood streets.
- » Monitoring drinking water quality for contaminants is critical. A nearby community discovered elevated levels of PFAS in their water system. Testing undertaken on the Portage water system produced just trace amounts PFAS in three wells.
- » The city employs a strong communication strategy, including a monthly printed newsletter (the *Portager*), a recently re-launched city website (portagemi.gov), five Facebook pages and a number of online resources for residents. Efforts are expected to be continued to advance and enhance technology for the improvement of city services and citizen outreach.
- » Certain of our public facilities are aging. The city intends to construct a new Portage Community Senior Center, contingent on a successful capital campaign, currently underway.

About the City Manager

The next City Manager of Portage will be an energetic, bold and dynamic leader. The city is proud of its position as the economic engine for the region. The City Manager will play a key role assisting the City Council in developing policy and implementing plans to continue the economic growth of the region.

The successful candidate will have a track record of community involvement with the expressed desire and intent to manage in a community with the characteristics of Portage and to do so into the foreseeable future.

Minimum Requirements

A Bachelor's Degree (Master's Degree preferred) in business or public administration, combined with at least five (5) years of experience as a local government manager or full-range assistant in a community comparable to Portage. Critical skills include finance, budget, economic development, organizational analysis, written and verbal communications, visioning and strength of both character and conviction. The successful candidate must be a superior manager and leader.

Characteristics of the Ideal Candidate

Important Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- » A thorough understanding of developmental economics
- » A record of successful collaboration with other jurisdictions
- » A strategic thinker who sets and directs the tactical steps designed to meet the goals set by the Mayor and City Council
- » A record of successful development including industrial, retail and residential

Style with the Mayor and City Council:

- » Performs both publicly and privately in an apolitical manner
- » Is available and accessible to the Mayor and all City Councilmembers
- » Demonstrates excellent oral and written communication skills, which he or she exercises regularly with the Mayor and City Council as a whole

Style with Staff

- » Fosters a customer service culture
- » Trusts and supports staff
- » Facilitates communication and service coordination among departments and individual staff members
- » Consistently follows City Council policy
- » Is fair, evenhanded and consistent
- » Is a coach and mentor; encourages and supports individual professional development

Style with the Community

- » Places emphasis on community relations over the day-to-day staff management challenges
- » Is engaged; regularly attends civic and community meetings
- » Is visible; attends community events
- » Is a “go to” person to get things done

Compensation

The compensation for the City Manager position will be highly competitive. The starting compensation is dependent upon the selected individual's qualifications and matched with the desired attributes being sought by the city. The city will pay reasonable and customary moving expenses for the next City Manager.

To Apply

In order to be considered for this position, please send your resume and cover letter with current salary to ***slavin@bellsouth.net***. The recruitment period will remain open until the position is filled.

For additional information about this job, please contact:

Mr. Robert Slavin, President
Slavin Management Consultants
3040 Holcomb Bride Road, Suite A-1
Norcross, GA 30071-1357
P (770) 449-4656 | F (770) 416-0848
slavin@bellsouth.net | slavinweb.com



AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY RECRUITER / EMPLOYER