



HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES

STATE OF MICHIGAN

Appropriations Requests for Legislatively Directed Spending Items

1. The sponsoring representative's first name:
Steve
2. The sponsoring representative's last name:
Frisbie
3. The cosponsoring representatives' names. All cosponsors must be listed. If none, please type 'n/a.' A signed letter from the sponsor approving the co-sponsorship and a signed letter from the member wishing to co-sponsor are required. Attach letters at question #9 below.
N/A
4. Name of the entity that the spending item is intended for:
Battle Creek Unlimited, Inc.
5. Physical address of the entity that the spending item is intended for:
4950 W. Dickman Road, Ste 1, Battle Creek, MI 49037
6. If there is not a specific recipient, the intended location of the project or activity:
Continuation of activities associated with the on-going re-naturalization efforts of the Kalamazoo River in downtown Battle Creek, Michigan in conjunction with the Army Corps of Engineers.
7. Name of the representative and the district number where the legislatively directed spending item is located:
Steve Frisbie, District 44
8. Purpose of the legislatively directed spending item. Please include how it provides a public benefit and why it is an appropriate use of taxpayer funding. Please also demonstrate that the item does not violate Article IV, S 30 of the Michigan Constitution. These dollars will be utilized to progress and advance the timeline and due diligence process with the United States Army Corp of Engineers to remove and re-naturalize the Kalamazoo River Concrete Channel flowing through a highly visible area of Downtown Battle Creek. The funds would allow the next phase of the USACE GI study to begin (match federal funds). The funds will lead to the prevention and elimination of blight.

The funds will be utilized to set the stage for the final product which will be a re-naturalized waterway that will restore an ecosystem while providing green space, public amenities, flood control, and a waterway accessible to the public. Please see the attachment for further information as well as a project breakdown by phase and cost.

This funding does not violate Article 4 Section 30 because Battle Creek Unlimited, Inc. is a non-profit.

9. Attach documents here if needed:

Attachments added to the end of this file.

10. The amount of state funding requested for the legislatively directed spending item.

13500000

11. Has the legislatively directed spending item previously received any of the following types of funding? Check all that apply.

["Federal","State","Local"]

12. Please select one of the following groups that describes the entity requesting the legislatively directed spending item:

Non-profit organization

13. For a non-profit organization, has the organization been operating within Michigan for the preceding 36 months?

Yes

14. For a non-profit organization, has the entity had a physical office within Michigan for the preceding 12 months?

Yes

15. For a non-profit organization, does the organization have a board of directors?

Yes

16. For a non-profit organization, list all the active members on the organization's board of directors and any other officers. If this question is not applicable, please type 'n/a.'

Erick Stewart – Chair, Nate Darlington – 1st Vice Chair, John Gallagher – 2nd Vice Chair, Sara Wallace – Treasurer, Stacy Flathau – Secretary, Kris Bahner – Member, Drew Schweitzer – Member, Valerie Christofferson – Member, Jim Sholl – Member, Ted Dearing – Member, Frank Tecumseh – Member, Neal Graziano – Member, Dr. Paul Watson, II – Member, Joe Michilizzi – Member, Mike Way – Member, Joe Sobieralski – Ex-Officio Member, Mayor Mark Behnke – Ex-Officio Member, Joe Schwarz, M.D. – Ex-Officio Member, Albert Bobrofsky – Ex-Officio Member

17. "I certify that neither the sponsoring representative nor the sponsoring representative's staff or immediate family has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the legislatively directed spending item."

Yes, this is correct

18. Anticipated start and end dates for the legislatively directed spending item:

October 1, 2025 through December 31, 2028

19. "I hereby certify that all information provided in this request is true and accurate."

Yes



April 15, 2025

The Honorable Steve Frisbie
Michigan State Capital
N-893 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Representative Frisbie:

Subject: 2025 Battle Creek Appropriation Request

Background/Overview: The following request builds upon a \$13M appropriation secured in 2022 (these funds have been earmarked and will be completely exhausted in 2025) by Representatives Thomas Albert and Matt Hall. The dollars were utilized to begin the process of securing land, demolishing buildings, providing resources for environmental due diligence and professional engineering services. These dollars have been utilized to pave the way and advance the timeline and due diligence process by the United States Army Corp of Engineers to remove and re-naturalize the Kalamazoo River Concrete Channel flowing through a highly visible area of Downtown Battle Creek. This project has been discussed and in the works for nearly 20+ years.

The Request: Battle Creek Unlimited (BCU) is requesting an appropriation of \$13.5M to further advance the project by securing additional identified parcels of need and to abate and demolish the former abandoned TreeHouse/Ralston Industrial Facility along the Kalamazoo River. The funds would also allow the next phase of the USACE GI study to begin. **Please see supplemental maps and imagery that outline the proposed river restoration area along with both a 100-year storm event and a 500-year storm event (data backed by Army Corp work thus far). **

Use of Funds:

PRIORITY 1

- Feasibility Study – Army Corps GI Study: \$2.5M (matching funds)
- Secure seven former abandoned railroad spurs: \$700K – significant portion would be paid to MDOT
- Other (engineering/contingencies/holding costs/admin/professional services): \$800K

PRIORITY 2

- Abate and demolish 70% of the former Treehouse/Ralston Industrial Facility: \$7.5M

- Secure 8-10 additional parcels: \$1.0M
- Abate and demolish 6-10 facilities: \$1.0M

Results/Activities Since 2022 Funding:

- Secured 17 parcels encompassing 47.456 acres along the river.
- TreeHouse/Ralston donated to BCU: \$3.24M value/savings.
- Graphic Package abated/demolished: \$10,635,182.
- Graphic Packaging land donated to BCU: ~\$600K value.
- City of Battle Creek awarded MDNR Fisheries Habitat Grant: \$357,500.
- City of Battle Creek awarded EGLE Dam Risk Reduction Grant of \$220,000.
 - Both grants allow planning and preliminary design for the Kalamazoo River Naturalization to begin over the next two years.
- BCU has applied for an additional EGLE Environmental Justice Impact Grant for \$500,000.
- The Hydraulic Modeling Report was completed in September 2024. This study was completed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Detroit District, for the City of Battle Creek, Michigan.
 - The USACE will collaborate with the City of Battle Creek, BCU, and the OHM advisors' team during the duration of the grant funded project.
- Land acquired by Battle Creek Unlimited alongside the Kalamazoo River Channel advanced the feasibility of the River Naturalization Project in the USACE Hydraulic Modeling Report.
 - This allows for the project to continue to move forward. Prior to that property acquisition this project was previously not feasible due to lack of available space.
- The project has been included in the S. 4367, the Thomas R. Carper Water Resource Development Act (WRDA) of 2024. Signed into law by the end of this year in January 2025.
- BCU has applied for a \$349,999.85 grant via Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program from the Minneapolis Foundation

Next Federal Steps:

Following the passage of the WRDA Legislation the next step would be for the project to secure federal appropriated funds totaling \$5 Million with a 50% local match requirement **(in current State Appropriation Request)** for the USACE General Investigative Study (GI) to start. After the funding is secured the USACE GI Study will be completed over a 3-year timeframe. Once the USACE GI Study is completed, the project partners will need to continue to secure local match funding, totaling 35% of the overall project cost to secure federal funding. After the funding is secured the Kalamazoo River Naturalization Project would go out for bid for construction and project completion. The local partner will need to provide 35% of the overall project cost share for the project with current estimates ranging

from \$173 Million to \$260 Million with contingency. 65% would be paid by the USACE when the project is federally appropriated.

Dollars Qualify Towards Future Federal Match:

Properties that have already been acquired through State funds and/or are planned to be acquired for the project will be eligible to count towards local match requirements by their appraised fair market value for the project's implementation and construction for the USACE.

Potential Local Match Sources for 35%:

- Kalamazoo River NRDA Trust – The Kalamazoo River Naturalization Project is in this trust's database and strategic plan (\$13M left in this fund).
- US FWS: National Fish Passage Program
- US EPA
- Great Lakes Fishery Trust
- FEMA: National Dam Safety Program
- NOAA: Open Rivers Initiative & Community Based Habitat Restoration
- USGS
- Trout Unlimited
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi
- MDOT/FHWA
- MDNR
- EGLE
- State of Michigan
- City of Battle Creek
- Calhoun County
- Calhoun County CVB
- Battle Creek Unlimited
- Local/Regional Corporations
- Local/Regional Philanthropic Organizations

Regards,

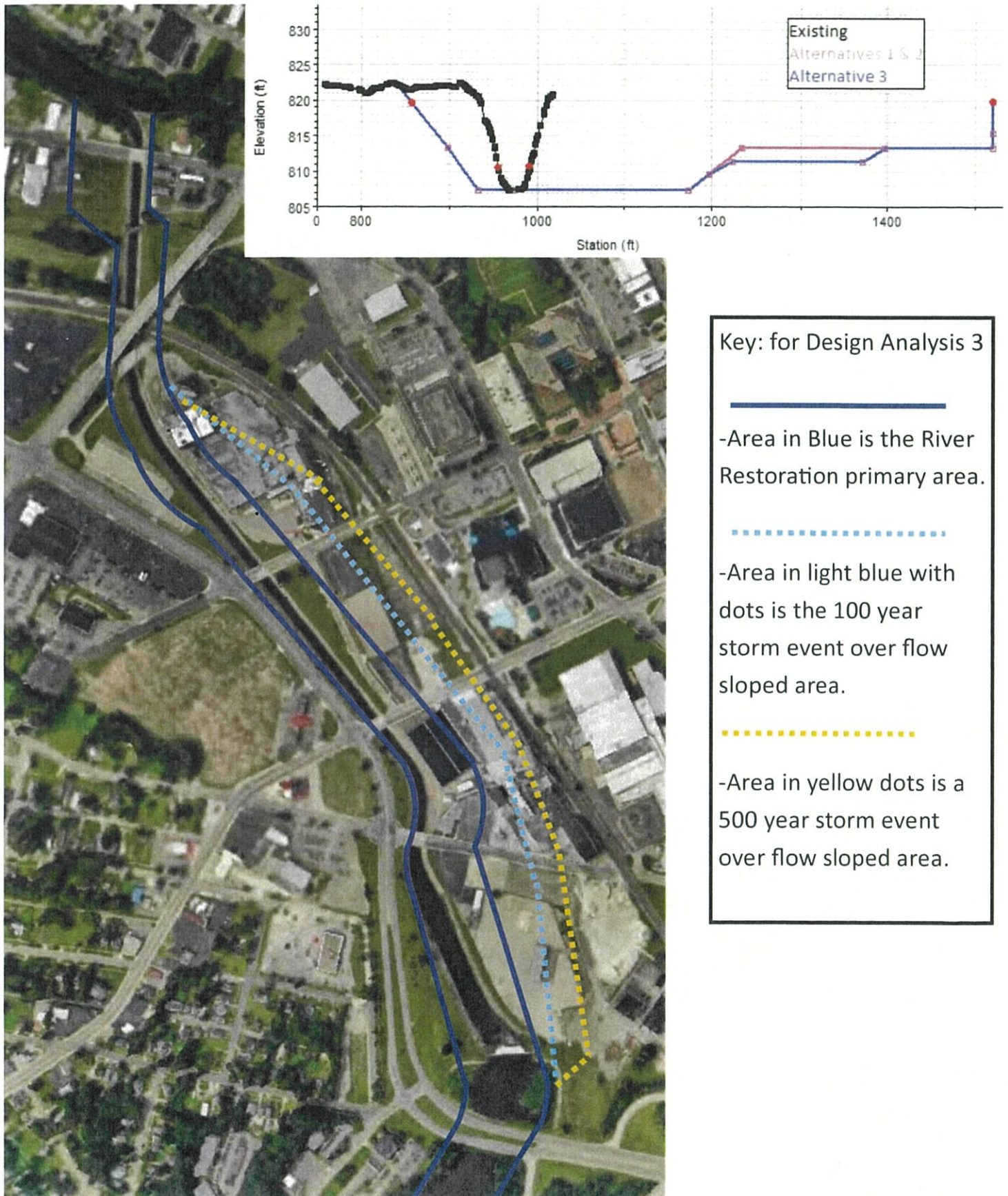


Joe Sobieralski, President & CEO
Battle Creek Unlimited

Cc: Mayor Mark Behnke, City of Battle Creek
Ted Dearing, Interim City Manager

Kalamazoo River Restoration Alternative Design Analysis 3

with satellite imagery overlay



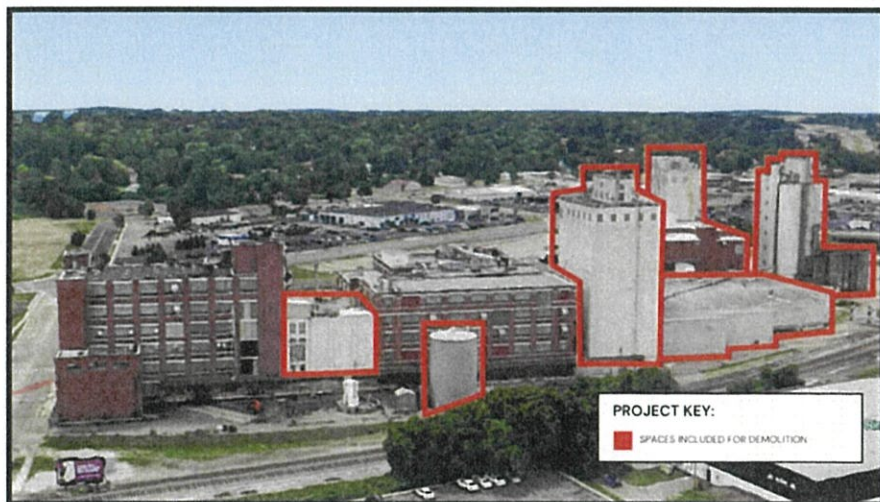
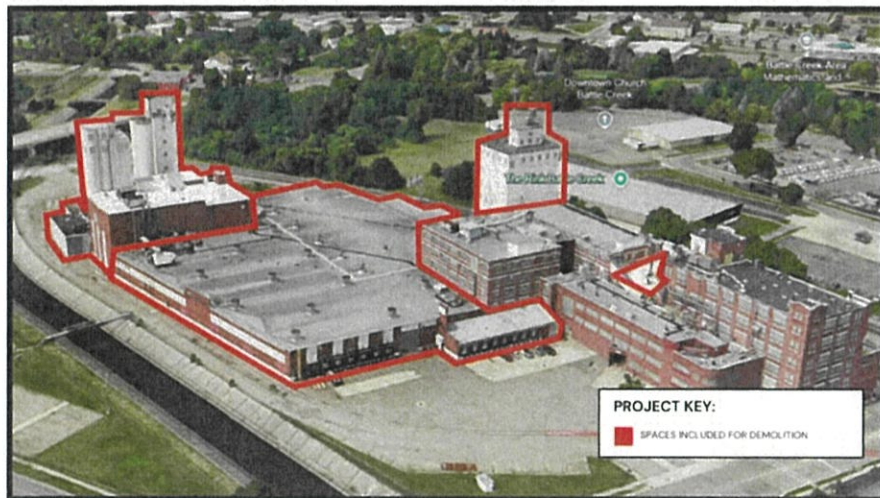
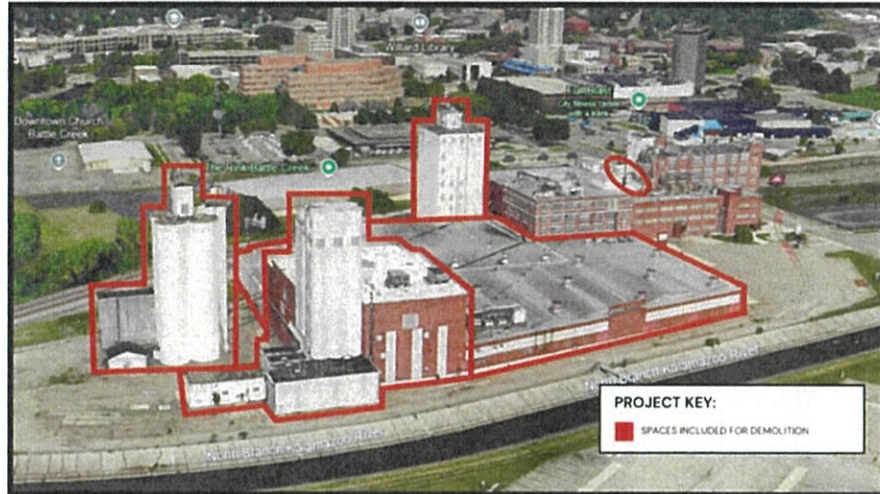
TREEHOUSE FACILITY DEMO PROJECT

PROJECT KEY:

SPACES INCLUDED FOR DEMOLITION.

UNKNOWN/ DATA NEEDED:

TOTAL DEMO COST





Press Releases

Huizenga Statement on Water Infrastructure Priorities in Battle Creek, Holland, Kalamazoo, & St. Joe Being Signed into Law

Washington, January 6, 2025

Tags: [*Great Lakes Issues*](#) , [*Jobs and the Economy*](#)

Over the weekend, the President signed S. 4367, the Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024, into law. This bipartisan legislation serves as the authorization for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to improve federally regulated water infrastructure across the nation. Specifically for Southwest Michigan, this measure includes several priorities that Congressman Huizenga advocated for to help the



Michigan signed into law,” **said Congressman Bill Huizenga.** “By authorizing studies for Battle Creek, Holland, Kalamazoo, and St. Joe, the Army Corps of Engineers can strengthen the local economy, enhance recreational opportunities, and take steps to mitigate and address urban flooding across Southwest Michigan.”

The Huizenga-led priorities included in S. 4367 are:

Battle Creek

The 2024 WRDA authorizes a new Army Corps study for the restoration of the Kalamazoo River in downtown Battle Creek enhancing both its ecology and economy. Specifically, the study would set the stage for an ecosystem restoration/river naturalization project to remove the concrete portions of the Kalamazoo River through downtown Battle Creek. Restoring the river channel from the environmental impacts of the concrete and the dam would not only address a wide variety of fish and wildlife ecosystem and related environmental issues, but it would also increase recreational opportunities, improve pedestrian access, and connect the downtown with the surrounding businesses and neighborhoods to spur economic opportunities in and around the downtown Battle Creek community.

Holland

The 2024 WRDA would authorize a new Army Corps study on the outer and inner harbor in Holland to examine the navigational and economic benefits of deepening the harbor. The current project depth for the Holland outer harbor is 23 ft and the inner harbor into Lake Macatawa is 21 ft. A study into navigational and economic improvements of deepening the outer and inner harbor project depths could provide for greater utilization of vessel capacity and attempt to avoid frequent and recurring “emergency” dredging issues due to shoaling in the harbor. Along the shores of Lake Michigan, current depths can cause Holland Harbor to go from “at depth” to critical very quickly. Proactively studying the advantages to deeper project depths and implementing them into action could improve future dredging and economic benefits to the area by allowing maximum vessel loads of material that support critical road construction and other projects in the region.

Kalamazoo



commonly impacted by flooding events could be supported by initiatives such as a bypass and closure project along the Portage Creek and a stormwater relief project in the Northside Neighborhood of Kalamazoo. These projects have the potential to benefit the entire city of Kalamazoo.

St. Joseph

The 2024 WRDA would authorize a new Army Corps study on the outer and inner harbor in St. Joseph to examine the navigational and economic benefits of deepening the harbor. The current project depth for the St. Joseph outer harbor is 21 ft and the inner harbor and turning basin is 18 ft. A study into navigational and economic improvements of deepening the outer and inner harbor project depths could provide for greater utilization of vessel capacity and attempt to avoid frequent and recurring “emergency” dredging issues due to shoaling in the harbor. Along the shores of Lake Michigan, current depths can cause St. Joseph Harbor to go from “at depth” to critical very quickly. Proactively studying the advantages to deeper project depths and implementing them into action could improve future dredging and economic benefits to the area by allowing maximum vessel loads of material that support critical road construction and other projects in the region.

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Email Address



CONGRESSMAN
BillHuizenga
Michigan's 4th District



House.gov



Washington, DC Office

2232 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515
T (202) 225-4401
F (202) 226-0779

Holland Office

170 College Ave. Suite 160
Holland, MI 49423
T (616) 251-6741
F (771) 200-5821

Portage Office

5228 Lovers Lane Suite 108
Portage, MI 49002
T (269) 569-8595
F (771) 200-5821