

Paving Progresses

The City of Valparaiso is embarking on its largest-ever paving season, appropriating \$8.8 million to fund an aggressive schedule that includes collector, arterial and neighborhood streets. “Historically, over the past several years, we have been committing about \$3.5 million annually to road maintenance. Compare that to the annual budget of about \$300,000 when I first took office 20 years ago. Certainly, costs have increased, but this aggressive annual budget of nearly \$9 million reflects a renewed priority on roadways,” said Mayor Jon Costas.

Better Bids Means More Miles

In further good news, the bids for projected projects came in lower than expected. “Due to the quality bids we received at lower rates than anticipated, we’re pleased to announce that we can add to our paving projects for the year,” said Max Rehlander, Engineering Director for the City of Valparaiso. “Look for paving work to include more than 42.4 lane miles of roadway plus 21 lane miles of pavement-extending crack sealing,” he said.

Funding

Funding sources for the 2024 paving program include a \$1.5 million Community



Crossings matching grant awarded through the Indiana Department of Transportation, along with funds from the local road and street fund, riverboat funds and the motor vehicle fund, with no need to raise any taxes or fees. While the list of roadways selected for work continues to evolve, decisions are made using a variety of information, such as usage, condition and cost. In addition, Valparaiso’s Engineering Department is uniquely aware of future projects pending with Valparaiso City Utilities and NIPSCO that would require disruption of the roadway.

Evaluating Roadways

Roads are evaluated each year. As an asset management system, the City uses the national PASER rating system, which stands for Pavement Assessment Surface Evaluation Rating and assigns a value of 1 through 10 to each roadway. The number reflects the quality, including things like

the amount and frequency of cracks and potholes. A brand new road is rated a 10 whereas older fractured streets requiring extensive reconstruction are at 1 and 2.

To learn more about how paving decisions are made, view our short video, available on the Engineering page at Valpo.us under “Resources.”

View Interactive Map of Projects

The City’s Engineering Department has created an interactive map showing roadway projects, including life-extending crack sealing, as well as sidewalk projects. The map allows users to find all 2024 infrastructure improvements and even enter addresses to find projects nearby. By clicking the project location on the map, users can learn more about the project scope and location. The map is available at tinyurl.com/ValpoWorks2024.

Dear Neighbors,

Looking around our city these days, I'm energized by so much activity. Everywhere I look, we're working to upgrade or enhance.



Today I saw crews out striping our roadways, paving streets, enhancing green spaces and adding accessible parking. And that's just the start. In fact, the orange cones of progress are everywhere as our record paving season continues, touching more than 60 miles this season with paving and pavement extending applications.

Another project adding vibrancy to our city is the Utility Box Art you're seeing citywide. It's wonderful to see these utility boxes elevated with designs by local artists. Read more about this innovative program in this issue of *City Talk*.

This issue also highlights ways we're working to make downtown more accessible and enjoyable with added accessible parking spaces and a respect for visitors with our Quiet Zone. We're also pleased to highlight Valparaíso's Community Recovery Coordinator and ways she can help individuals and our community. In addition to this newsletter, we encourage you to learn more about city services by visiting our website at valpo.us or following us on Facebook at Valparaíso Now.

We continue to maximize our city this busy season and hope to see you all enjoying your favorite spaces.

Sincerely,

Jon Costas

Jon Costas, Mayor

City of Valparaíso

Seeks Nominations for Good Neighbor, Rising Star

The City of Valparaíso is seeking nominations for two recognition programs to highlight individuals who demonstrate exemplary commitment to the Valparaíso community. "Our **Good Neighbor and Rising Star** awards are ways we can recognize people who make life better for our community," said Mayor Jon Costas. A committee will review nominations and select a recipient to be recognized by Mayor Costas at the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony at Central Park Plaza.

Nominate Someone Extraordinary

To learn more and nominate someone who demonstrates volunteerism and commitment to community, visit the Community Engagement page at Valpo.us. **Nominations are due November 1, 2024.** Both awards are a program by the Community Engagement Department at the City of Valparaíso.

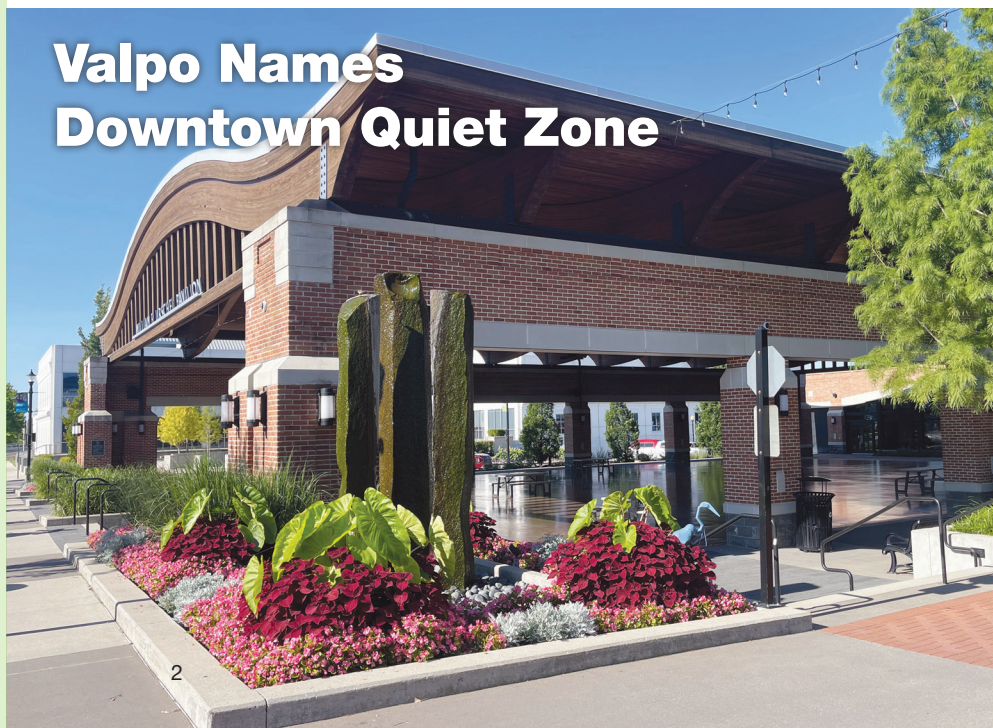
The **Good Neighbor Recognition** program recognizes individuals who demonstrate volunteerism and commitment to the community by building a brighter future for Valparaíso. Nominees may represent all age groups, interest areas and walks of life.



The newly created **Rising Star Recognition** celebrates outstanding youth (10-18 years old) who contribute to the success of Valparaíso by demonstrating volunteerism, empathy, charity and leadership. Representatives from the Mayor's Youth Council will select a recipient.



Valpo Names Downtown Quiet Zone



Valpo Offers Help in Addiction Recovery

Substance use disorder, also known as addiction, is a disease that impacts thousands of Indiana residents and beyond, affecting their lives and their communities. The City of Valparaiso has created a unique program to help people recover from addiction and improve their lives. “Addiction isn’t a behavior problem. It’s a chronic disorder that changes the brain and the body,” said Kristi Chervenak, who serves as Valparaiso’s Community Recovery Coordinator. “We’re here to help individuals and families who are struggling with addiction.”

In her role, Chervenak can help Valpo residents access help for all types of addiction and addictive behaviors, including drugs, alcohol, gambling and addiction to other substances and activities. Since taking on the role as coordinator, Chervenak has already helped 46 clients – people of all ages, genders and backgrounds.

“Offering these coordination services is something that has really worked. Often the recovery process can be overwhelming and the wait times are long. We’ve succeeded

in getting people the help they need when they need it,” said Chervenak. She can help people by removing barriers to recovery, such as finding insurance, locating treatment, arranging transportation and more. “One of my clients came to us after overdosing twice within two weeks. His future and his life were in danger. Today he has a job, a vehicle and he’s enrolled in college. He thanks me every single time I see him,” she said.

Services Available

In her role, Chervenak can help individuals in securing treatment, as well as any necessary community resources and housing options. “I help people in sorting out their options for recovery, from learning what kind of support is available, finding facilities and resources, determining insurance coverage and available assistance and locating long-term support,” she said.

Valparaiso’s Community Recovery Coordinator position was established in 2023. The idea for the position grew out of the Opioid Solutions Panel hosted by the

City of Valparaiso which gathered experts in many areas of addiction, including medical professionals, recovery experts and those who work in the courts. The Community Recovery Coordinator is employed by Porter County PACT and funded by the City of Valparaiso, using funds awarded in the National Opioid Settlement.



Meet Kristi Chervenak
Valparaiso’s Community
Recovery Coordinator

HOW TO GET HELP

Valparaiso residents can access these free coordination services or refer someone by calling **(219) 546-9940** or visiting **RecoveryConnectionPC.org**.



The City of Valparaiso’s Board of Works and Safety has named the city’s downtown a Quiet Zone to enhance the experience of visiting downtown. “Our downtown is surely a special and welcoming place. We want to respect what has been created by reducing unreasonable noise,” said Mayor Jon Costas. “Loud noises affect the downtown experience and we’re looking to respect those who are shopping, dining and visiting our award-winning downtown,” said Costas.

The City of Valparaiso is looking specifically to reduce unreasonable noise created by defective or modified exhaust systems, revving engines, horns, loud radios, engine braking and other sources of elective noise. The downtown Quiet Zone is designated as Jefferson to Indiana and Campbell to Morgan, and the enforcement will extend from May 1 through October 31.

The Valparaiso Police Department is equipped with new decibel meters to measure noise and will be enforcing the Valparaiso’s existing citywide noise ordinance which was adopted in 2020 and closely matches state guidelines. The enhanced enforcement will be concentrated in the newly created Quiet Zone.

To learn more about the city’s noise ordinance, visit tinyurl.com/ValpoNoise.

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City of Valparaiso **Expands Art Program**

The City of Valparaiso's Art Advisory Committee has expanded the City's Utility Box Art Program, adding 24 new works created by local artists. "We're fortunate to have so many talented artists in Valparaiso. This program allows us to elevate everyday utility boxes with original works, celebrating our local art and artisans," said Mayor Jon Costas.

"I go down Valparaiso Street daily to bring my daughter to Montessori. She will love to see the honeycomb and bee that Momma painted," said Jennifer Evan, one of the artists featured in the new installations. A request for entries was issued at the end of 2023 by the City's Art Advisory Committee and funding for the wraps and installation is provided by the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission.

The Utility Box Art program was created by the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission in 2016 to promote public art and local artists. Previously the program has supported 12 locations, primarily in the downtown area. The expansion will feature boxes throughout the entire community.

To see designs and learn more about the City of Valparaiso Public Art projects, visit the Community Engagement page at Valpo.us.



Valparaiso Artist Dorothy Graden is pictured with her work as one of the newly expanded Utility Box Art Program. The City of Valparaiso's Art Advisory Committee features 24 new works on utility boxes citywide.

Adding Accessibility

The City of Valparaiso continues to work in making our city more accessible. In addition to expanding ADA-compliance in sidewalks and facilities, we've recently added these options:

More Designated Parking

The City of Valparaiso has added 13 accessible parking spaces to the downtown. The newly designated spots are located in the downtown parking area, defined as the 20-block area bordered by Chicago Street to the north, Monroe Street to the south, Napoleon Street to the west and Morgan Boulevard to the east.



Hearing Assistance Devices

The City of Valparaiso now offers hearing assistance devices to aid people attending public meetings. You may request a headset and portable receiver at city meetings. City meetings are also available online, with closed captioning at valpo.us.

