



Valpo Opens Transit Center

The City of Valparaiso has opened the new Valpo Transit Center, located at 252 S. Campbell, adjacent to Journeyman Distillery. The new facility includes a waiting area and lobby, as well as restrooms and ticket sales/information. “The Transit Center will be the focal point for our Transit Oriented District. The City of Valparaiso is committed to providing transit within our city, to Chicago and beyond, connecting our residents to each other and the greater region,” said Mayor Jon Costas.

The Valpo Transit Center was completed through a public-private partnership, with support from Journeyman Distillery and the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission. Journeyman also provided completion of the parking lot which serves riders of the ChicaGo Dash and Greyhound.

The Valpo Transit Center serves as home for the ChicaGo Dash express bus to Chicago. Newly wrapped ChicaGo Dash buses feature a colorful design that promotes Valparaiso as the perfect place to shop, dine and play as the buses travel to and from Chicago five times each weekday. The buses offer comfortable airplane-style seating, free on-board Wi-Fi and bike racks, plus free parking at the Valpo Transit Center. New buses featuring new branding are also on the way for the V-Line, Valparaiso’s intracity bus.

“This new transit center is just the beginning for our Transit Oriented Development (TOD) as the area surrounding Journeyman continues to grow,” said Beth Shrader, Valparaiso’s Planning and Transit Director. “Next year we plan to create a pedestrian pathway connecting the TOD to our downtown,” she said.

The City of Valparaiso has been committed to transit since 2007 when it introduced the V-Line intracity bus, making Valparaiso one of the smallest cities in the United States to offer its own independent public transit system. The ChicaGo Dash express bus to Chicago was introduced in 2008. These services have been supported by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), the Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) and the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission (RDC).

For schedules, fares and ticket information, visit **ValpoTransit.com**.

Dear Neighbors,

As we move into the season of falling leaves and holiday lights, I'm so gratified by all we've accomplished this year. We've opened the Valpo Transit Center, which is more than a place to board the ChicaGo Dash bus to Chicago. Our new transit center is the start of a transit oriented district that connects us to each other, the greater region and beyond. Back in 2007 when we introduced public transit, many were skeptical that it would last. But nearly 20 years later, we're still moving ahead.

Likewise, we just opened the Lincoln Highway Garage, adding vitality to our award-winning downtown. Located across the street, The Linc multi-use development is making quick progress, soon to add retail opportunities and desirable downtown housing. At the same time, we've upgraded underground infrastructure surrounding these new spaces, improving drainage and the environment for years to come. All of these projects satisfy long-term goals as part of the city's long-term downtown plan.

Further, we've wrapped up a record paving year, with more than 42 lane miles of roadway paving, plus 21 lane miles of pavement-extending crack sealing citywide. It's great to see all the new smooth roads and we're looking ahead to ways to continue these productive paving years.

The road ahead certainly looks good for our community and we're celebrating wins in public safety (the new CALEA accreditation for the Valparaiso Police Department), fiscal responsibility (a stellar review on the recent audit), and more. And welcoming in our new Mayor's Youth Council is an excellent reminder that our future is bright.

We continue to work together to make our city the place we want to call home. I wish you all the best in the joyous season ahead.

Sincerely,

Jon Costas

Jon Costas, Mayor



Lincoln Highway Garage Opens



Valparaiso's Lincoln Highway Garage, located at the intersection of Lincolnway and Morgan Boulevard, is now open for public parking. "We're so pleased to offer additional parking to support Valparaiso's downtown as well as the new multi-use housing development, The Linc. Expanded housing and parking options have been a part of the City of Valparaiso's downtown plan for some time, adding even more vitality to our award-winning downtown," said Mayor Jon Costas.

The new Lincoln Highway Garage offers a total of 360 parking spots, including 152 public spaces, six EV charging spots and seven accessible parking spots plus 66 shared spots available to the public from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Like most other City of Valparaiso public parking, parking at the Lincoln Highway Garage will be free for the first three hours. You may purchase a permit (available at City Hall) for all-day parking. Overnight parking (considered 2:00 am to 6:00 am) is prohibited in the Lincoln Highway Garage, unless you are a resident of The Linc and have a Linc Resident permit.

The upper floors of the garage will be restricted from vehicle access as these levels will be reserved for The Linc residents. To learn more about parking at the Lincoln Highway Garage, visit tinyurl.com/LHG-Valpo.

Council Corner

Each issue of City Talk features a member of the City Council.

Ellen Kapitan
City Council, At Large
Serving since 2024



Ellen Kapitan has been a resident of Valparaiso for 10 years and was elected to the Valparaiso City Council in 2023. Her priorities are traffic and safety with an emphasis on pedestrian safety, environmental sustainability, and transparent and accessible government.

You can reach Ellen Kapitan at EKapitan@valpo.us.

Paving Progresses

The City of Valparaiso is completing 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 and we continue to seek ways to keep this progress going,” said Mayor Jon Costas.

Better Bids Means More Miles

In positive news, bids for projected projects came in lower than expected. “Due to the quality bids we received at lower rates than anticipated, we have been able to complete even more paving projects this year,” said Max Rehlander, Engineering Director for the City of Valparaiso. “As our season wraps up, we’ve been able 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.

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.

Valparaiso Swears in Mayor’s Youth Council

The City of Valparaiso has sworn in a new class for the 2024-2025 Mayor’s Youth Council. “We’re so pleased to welcome this group of students to the Mayor’s Youth Council. We look forward to getting to know them as they learn more about city government,” said Mayor Jon Costas. The Council is an opportunity for students to learn about city government, develop leadership skills and encourage civic engagement.



The Mayor’s Youth Council has been sworn in for 2024-2025.

The Mayor’s Youth Council was introduced in 2021 with support from Valparaiso High School, inviting 11th graders to apply to participate. The council meets monthly, learning from elected and appointed officials, participating in volunteer opportunities, and cultivating leadership skills, beginning with a Youth Retreat in August.

To learn more about the Mayor’s Youth Council, visit the Mayor’s page at Valpo.us.

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City of Valparaiso Earns Stellar Marks on Audit

The Indiana State Board of Accounts has completed its annual audit of the City of Valparaiso, with the City earning a stellar report. In addition to the extraordinary audit, the City maintains its AA/Stable bond rating, based on the city's strong financial oversight, resources and overall performance. This rating by Standard & Poor's Global Ratings places Valparaiso among the top communities in the state with only 22 Indiana municipalities receiving a rating of AA or better.

"We congratulate our Clerk-Treasurer's office and our leadership team for the City's strong financial management. While we don't frequently borrow funds, it's gratifying to know that our financial position is strong, qualifying us for the very best interest rates and maximizing funds for our taxpayers," said Mayor Jon Costas. "We've worked hard to enhance our financial strength over the past 20 years, securing millions in state and federal grants and



accumulating more than \$4.5 million in a rainy-day fund. This sound financial management has saved Valparaiso taxpayers millions of dollars and we've been able to accomplish monumental projects without always needing to borrow," said Costas.

To learn more about the City of Valparaiso and current projects, visit valpo.us.



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Valparaiso Police Department Awarded 5th CALEA Accreditation

The Valparaiso Police Department has been awarded its fifth accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA), the gold standard in policing worldwide. "Achieving reaccreditation is no small feat and reflects the department's dedication to maintaining the highest standards of professional policing," said Valparaiso Police Chief Andrew McIntyre.

"We congratulate our VPD on this prestigious accreditation and applaud their commitment to our community by holding themselves to the very highest standards," said Valparaiso Mayor Jon Costas. "In Valparaiso, we value public safety and commend our extraordinary police department for their work each day."

As one of only 14 municipalities in the State of Indiana to achieve CALEA accreditation, the VPD exemplifies the highest level of professional excellence.