

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TO LEASE LAND FOR FARMING PURSUANT TO INDIANA CODE § 36-7-14-22

I-Overview

This Request for Proposals (“RFP”) is issued by the **Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission** (“Commission”) consistent with Indiana Code § 36-7-14-22. Proposals are invited for the lease of property owned by the Commission for the purpose of **farming in 2025 and 2026**. The Property location is approximately **500 North, Valparaiso**. Interested parties are encouraged to review information posted at www.ci.valparaiso.in.us/120/Redevelopment-Commission for the exact location of the Property, a map detailing the areas where farming will be permitted, and other relevant information.

II-Preparation and Submission of Proposals

Proposals shall include the following:

- a) The Respondent’s legal name, address, and telephone number;
- b) Respondent’s farming experience;
- c) Proposed crops to be planted in 2025 and 2026;
- d) Proposed lease terms based on the total number of acres to be farmed;
- e) Proposed farming techniques (including types of fertilizers and other chemicals to be used); and,
- f) any other relevant information Respondent wishes to provide.

Additional Considerations

Respondents may be requested to discuss their Proposals with Commission staff. Respondents submitting Proposals may be asked to respond to additional questions and/or submit additional information. The Commission may also issue Addendums and/or Supplemental Requests to this RFP. Commission staff may make a recommendation to the Commission as to which Proposal, if any, should be considered. The Commission may select a Proposal after considering staff recommendations and the criteria described in this Proposal. Upon selection, the Commission may enter negotiations with the Respondent. The Commission reserves the right, to reject any or all Proposals.

III-Obligations of Respondent Submitting a Proposal

The Respondent submitting the selected Proposal must agree to do each of the following:

1. Enter into a *Farm Lease* incorporating the terms of the RFP, the terms included in the successful Proposal, and other provisions negotiated by the Commission and the Respondent.
2. Commit to employing appropriate farming techniques.

IV-Instructions for Submitting Proposals

Submitting Proposals

- a) All Proposals shall be submitted in a sealed envelope. **No facsimile or email submission will be accepted.** The envelope must be labeled with the Respondent's name and address; and the words "Farm Lease Proposal– Redevelopment Commission".
- b) If a Proposal is sent through the mail or other delivery system, the sealed envelope shall be enclosed in a separate envelope with the notation "PROPOSAL ENCLOSED" on the face of the outer envelope.
- c) Proposals shall be filed in the Valparaiso Clerk-Treasurer's Office in Valparaiso City Hall located at 166 Lincolnway, Valparaiso, Indiana, 46383, before the hour of **3:00 p.m. (CST) on January 6, 2025.**
- d) All Proposals submitted become the property of the City and are a matter of public record.
- e) The Commission is not responsible for late or lost Proposals due to mail service inadequacies, traffic or other similar reasons. Proposals received after the designated time may not be considered in the selection process.
- g) The Commission reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Proposals and to waive informalities or irregularities in the selection process.
- h) A Respondent may, upon written request, modify or withdraw their Proposal at any time prior to the stated deadline. A request to modify or withdraw a Proposal must be signed by the same person who signed the original Proposal. No Proposal may be modified or withdrawn after the opening of the Proposals.

Opening of Proposals

Consistent with Indiana Code § 36-7-14-22(e), the Proposals received will be opened in public by the Commission's Executive Director on **January 9, 2025**, during the Commission's regularly scheduled meeting, which begins at 4:10 pm CT.

Applicable Laws

Any contract resulting from a Proposal submitted will be construed in accordance with and governed by the laws of the State of Indiana.

Authority to Bind Submitting Entity

The signatory for the Respondent represents that he or she has been duly authorized to execute the Proposal documents on behalf of the Respondent and has obtained all necessary or applicable approvals to make this submission on behalf of the Respondent when his or her signature is affixed to the Proposal.

Requests for Clarifications and Addenda

1. Respondents intending to submit Proposals who have questions should contact **George Douglas**, Executive Director of the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission, at gdouglas@valpo.us.

2. Interpretations or clarifications determined necessary by the Commission will be issued by addenda mailed, e-mailed, or otherwise delivered to all Respondents recorded by the Commission as having received the RFP and requesting to receive updated information. Only questions answered by formal written addenda will be binding. Oral and other interpretations or clarifications from any other source will be without legal effect.
3. All requests for clarification to this solicitation must be received at least one (1) week before the opening date to allow for the issuance of any addendums determined by the Commission to be necessary.
4. To receive addendums or other information updates, Respondents must email **Debra Melcic**, Executive Assistant of the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission, at dmelcic@valpo.us. to register their email contact information.
5. The Commission reserves the right to amend, revise, extend, modify and revoke this RFP. The Commission also reserves the right to waive any errors and omissions by Respondents in any Proposals.



Valpo Sports & Rec Campus

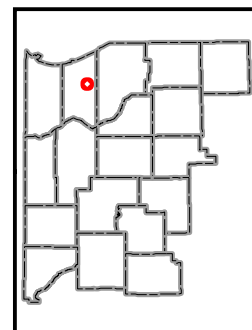
Native Prairie (14.6 ac)

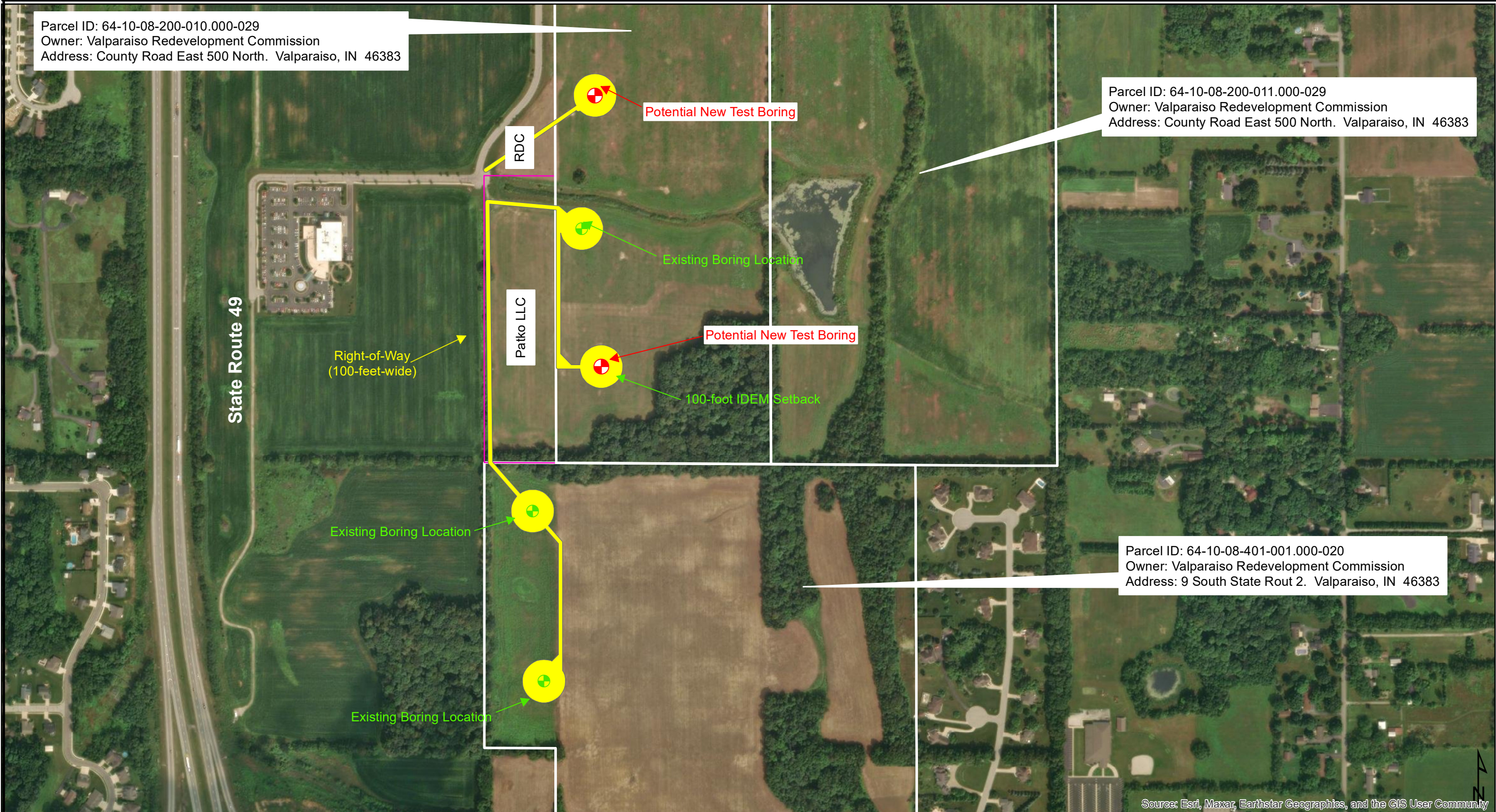
Native Prairie - Non USFWS (10.0 ac)

Invasive Control - Non USFWS (34.4 ac)

Porter County, Indiana

- Seed_Mix**
- Yellow square: Dry Mesic
 - Blue square: Mesic
 - Green square: Wet Mesic
 - Green square: VRD_SRC_Planting
 - Yellow hatched square: Invasive_Management
 - Red square: Boundary
 - Yellow line: Transportation



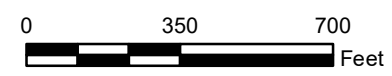


Parcel ID: 64-10-08-200-010.000-029
Owner: Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission
Address: County Road East 500 North. Valparaiso, IN 46383

Parcel ID: 64-10-08-200-011.000-029
Owner: Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission
Address: County Road East 500 North. Valparaiso, IN 46383

Parcel ID: 64-10-08-401-001.000-020
Owner: Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission
Address: 9 South State Rout 2. Valparaiso, IN 46383

- Legend**
- Potential New Test Borings
 - Existing Test Boring
 - 100-foot IDEM Sanitary Isolation Area
 - 200-foot Porter Co. Septic Setback Area
 - Parcels



Valparaiso City Services	
Proposed Park Property Access	
	FIGURE 1

Request for Proposal to Lease Land for Farming

Pursuant to Indiana Code 36-7-14-22

Thomas J Murphy III (253 E 1400 N, Chesterton, IN) is requesting to lease the property at **500 N, Valparaiso** for the **2025-2026** crop year.

I am a self-employed farmer who began farming on my own in 2014. I worked for a farmer from 2000 who was preparing for retirement prior to leasing and farming own my own. Being a farmer has been a lifelong dream and commitment. In 2023, I was named Conservationist Farmer of the year by Porter County.

Each year, I rotate crops on farms to save on commercial fertilizer. For example, farm was previously planted to soybeans in 2023, I would plant that farm to non-gmo corn in 2024. I plan on continuing to plant corn and soybeans in 2025 and 2026 based on the appropriate rotation of crops in each particular field and farm from the prior year.

I propose a lease on the property at **500 N, Valparaiso** for **2025-2026** as a cash rent bid. My bid for the lease of these land for farming would be based upon the amount of total tillable acres. This cash bid would be **\$185/tillable acre**. The amount would be paid to **Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission** in full on **April 1, 2025**. Payment for the second year of the lease would be paid on **April 1, 2026**.

The farming practices used for this land would be comparable my current farming practice. Our farm utilizes no till and cover crops to maintain soil integrity. This allows me to lower the amount of man-made fertilizers spread on farmland. By foliar feeding the crops, I am able to use the minimum fertilizer necessary for maintaining a good crop without using excess amounts. Newly innovative technology, recent education, and state of the art equipment ensure that application is appropriate and custom for each field. I combine tissue samples and scouting to complement the process and determine the correct need individually. By integrating these practices into our farming each year, I can assure land owners and myself that I am using only the amounts of chemistry and fertilizers necessary.

I have been a member of the Porter County Soil and Water board for 3 years because I feel it is important to conserve the land we live on and around. I am a member of the Shirley Heinz advisory board working to teach and educate individuals on best farming practices. I hope that these farm procedures will become more widely used by other farmers. By changing our methods, we can help to conserve farmland and protect the surrounding environment. I am a member of the Indiana Corn Growers Association (ICGA) for 5 years. With this association, I have the opportunity to serve and lobby with local, state, and nationwide government officials to keep farming sustainable. I am invested in farming as a career and a lifestyle. By staying up-to-date on the newest and best practices, by continuing my own education and applying this into my farm, and by lobbying for the career of farming, I hope to be able to keep farming as a career available for my children and the younger generation of aspiring farmers.



Thomas J Murphy III

Land Lease Proposal Letter

January 3rd, 2025

Johnson Brothers

292 E 500 N, Valparaiso, Indiana, 46383

219-241-2500

Johnsnbrothers@gmail.com

To, Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission,

I am writing to submit my formal proposal for leasing land for agricultural purposes in 2025 and 2026 at the approximate location of 500 North, Valparaiso, IN. Below, I have outlined the key information you requested as part of the proposal process.

1. Legal Name, Address, and Telephone Number

The legal name of the respondent is Gregory Wayne Johnson. My contact information is as follows:

- Address: 292 E 500 N, Valparaiso, IN, 46383
- Telephone Number: 219-241-2500
- Email: Johnsnbrothers@gmail.com

2. Respondent's Farming Experience

I have 45 years of experience in farming and agriculture, specializing in grain farming with practice in livestock management which includes beef cattle and market lambs. Over the years I have successfully managed corn and soybean operations, with a particular emphasis on sustainable farming practices and efficient use of resources. I have a proven track record of respectable yields and maintaining good soil health through various farming practices.

3. Proposed Crops to be Planted in 2025 and 2026

For the 2025 and 2026 seasons, I propose to plant the following crops on the leased land:

- **2025:** Soybeans and corn in rotation. Winter wheat as a cover crop following soybeans.
- **2026:** Soybeans and corn in rotation. Winter wheat as a cover crop following soybeans.

I intend to select crops based on optimal growing conditions and market demands, with a focus on maximizing the yield while preserving the quality of the soil.

4. Proposed Lease Terms

Based on the number of acres to be farmed, I proposed the following lease terms:

- Total acreage to be farmed: 159.99 acres
- Proposed lease term: two years (2025 and 2026) with possible extension
- Annual rent: \$190 per acre
- Payment schedule: Our proposed scheduling of payment would be to keep it the same as our previous lease terms. Each year of the proposed lease our first payment is \$1,000 on or before June 15, 2025, with the remaining balance of \$30,400, due on or before December 31st, 2025. Same payment terms follow for 2026.

5. Proposed Farming Techniques

In the proposed farming operations, I plan to utilize the following farming techniques to ensure high productivity while promoting sustainability:

- Fertilizers: On our corn crop, we intend to apply preplant dry fertilizer, such as potash and phosphate as needed. Additionally, we intend to knife in anhydrous ammonia preplant as needed for increased nitrogen levels in our corn crop. On our soybean crop, we intend to preplant apply dry fertilizer, such as potash and phosphate as needed.
- Chemicals: For our corn and soybean crops pesticide usage we generally do not apply any pesticides, because the corn is genetically rootworm resistant. For our crop herbicide usage we generally preplant glyphosate and apply a postplant glyphosate with a combination of slightly different chemicals to maintain control of round-up resistant plants as necessary.
- Tillage and Crop Rotation: We intend to no till both our soybean and corn crop. For our crop rotation plans we intend to rotate corn and soybeans annually with winter wheat as a cover crop. Additionally, based on the hilly ground, we intend to preserve previous existing grassed waterways, along with installing grassed waterways where necessary.

I will ensure that all farming techniques are applied in compliance with local agricultural regulations and best practices to maintain soil health and minimize environmental impact.

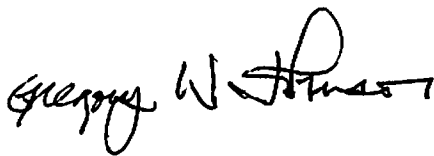
6. Additional Information

For additional information, I felt it would be of utmost importance to provide the history of our family farm, along with what this land means to us, in order for your decision to be best informed. Our farm dates all the way back to the 1890s. However, Johnson Brothers began what it is today, through my grandfather Arthur Johnson. Arthur Johnson was the father of four; Janet, Art, Eugene, and Loren. The three sons of my grandfather were able to further develop Johnson Brothers to make it what it is today. While raising his children, Arthur made it a life goal to instill the lessons of hardwork and perseverance to allow his family farm to last generations. Farming for the Johnsons is not about money or glamour, but doing it because it's a love passed down generation after generation where the goal is to do something passionately while positively impacting our community and feeding America. Now, my sons Tyler, Zack, and Cody, have been presented with the opportunity to be the next Johnson Brothers. Which is why continuing to lease the land my grandfather, father, and uncles spent countless hours in, means so much.

This land was passionately farmed by Johnson Brothers for nearly 100 years until 2020 when the city purchased the ground for development. When the city approached our farm in 2023 asking us to farm the ground, the land was overgrown with trees and brush and in desperate need of maintenance, however we were beyond grateful to have the opportunity to farm it again. When we signed the lease, we quickly began working to restore the land to what it was before the city purchased it. The upkeep and successful crop Johnson Brothers has farmed on this land in even these few short years is an example enough of why we make the best candidate for this lease agreement.

Any questions or concerns I will be available and eager to help. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory W. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "G" and a long, sweeping underline.

RFP Proposal

Matthew L. Goetz

594 East 400 North

Valparaiso, IN 46383

Farming Experience:

Our farm has been in Washington Twp. Since 1903. It is a 6th generation family farm that continues to farm in the Valparaiso area. I have been on our family farm my entire life and I started my farming career in 1994 renting my first 42 acres. I now currently farm with my brother, two cousins, and my son in and around the Valparaiso area.

We all work together to get the farming done, each person specializing in a certain operation to plant, maintain, and harvest a crop. With this team of people, I have high confidence in raising a high yielding crop and getting the work done in a timely manner.

Proposed Crops:

We will be planting a mixture of corn and soybeans for the 2025 and 2026 crop year. Winter wheat may be an option if market conditions dictate. We will look at what crop was planted in each field in 2024 and decide if the field will be rotated to corn or soybeans for the 2025 crop year. It looks like 91.69 acres of corn and 68.29 acres of beans was planted in in 2024 by the previous tenant. We plan on moving towards a 50/50 or 60/40 rotation of corn/soybeans for 2025 and 2026. Market price and crop profitability will play a role in crop rotation decision making.

Lease terms:

There is **159.99** tillable acres shown on the provided field maps. We will pay **\$245.00** per tillable acre for both the 2025 and 2026 crop year. The total amount paid each year shall be **\$39,200.00**. We are flexible on when payments are due. Typically, we have paid land leases ½ due April 1st and ½ due November 1st of each

crop year. We are also willing to pay in full April 1st if so desired by the Valparaiso Redevelopment commission.

Farming techniques:

On our farm we are predominately 100% no-till. However, there are certain situations that require a tillage pass, either to manage crop residue, to dry out soil in a wet spring, or to smooth soil out due to ruts or rough soil. Sometimes when a tillage pass is needed, we use a vertical tillage tool that has minimal soil disturbance. This aids in less soil erosion if a tillage pass is needed.

We use modern fertilizers and herbicides to produce a high yielding crop and control weeds while maintaining good stewardship of the land. We use variable rate technology to apply fertilizer based on what soil tests dictate to maintain proper soil fertility. This helps us to not “over apply” fertilizer and maintain a balance between profitability and soil fertility.

Fertilizers used in corn:

10-34-0 with sulfur and micronutrients as a starter fertilizer applied at planting.

Potash and Phosphate are broadcast spread using variable rate technology according to soil tests recommendations.

28% nitrogen with herbicide pass

Anhydrous Ammonia applied as a side dress application in crop

Fertilizer used in soybeans:

Potash and Phosphate are broadcast spread using variable rate technology according to soil tests recommendations.

Chemical use:

We will apply commonly used farm chemicals to control weeds, insects/bugs, and plant diseases as needed to produce a high yielding crop. A more detailed list will be provided to the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission if so desired. It is

important to have good weed control so the land being farmed will provide a reasonable yield and not let noxious weed seed spread.

Other Relevant Information:

We have been farming the Creekside-250W property for over 20 years. This property is owned by the Valparaiso Park Department and we have worked well with them over the years.

Our home farm is within 3.5 miles of the 500 North property which I feel will help us in managing this land to the highest level.

We also have the ability (bat wing mower) to keep grass areas/field edges mowed and trimmed to keep property looking nice throughout the year.

I have access to source and sell small seeds and native seed mixes if the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission and/or Valparaiso Parks and Recreation Department needs access to that for the areas described on property.