

VALPARAISO TAKES STRATEGIC STEP

in Revitalizing Former McGill Site

A significant piece of Valparaiso's history, the former McGill factory at 909 Lafayette St., later Regal Beloit, stood as a major employer for decades. Since Regal Beloit's closure in 2021, the expansive 242,000-square-foot building and 16-acre site have remained vacant. Recognizing a unique opportunity for revitalization, the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission acquired the property as part of the City's commitment to strategic redevelopment.

"As a dynamic city with a renowned parks system, we are constantly evaluating our resources to meet current and future community needs. The documented demand for indoor recreation and enrichment, coupled with the availability of this existing structure came together and presented a timely and fiscally sound opportunity. Rather than incurring the significant expense of new construction, we are looking to repurpose this former factory into a valuable community asset for all ages and abilities," said Mayor Jon Costas.

Located within the Central Neighborhood, just a stone's throw from downtown, the McGill site offers a highly accessible and visible location. Its proximity to key amenities and neighborhoods enhances its potential to serve as a vibrant community hub.

While environmental remediation, funded by previous owner Emerson Electric, is underway on a portion of the site, the City of Valparaiso is actively exploring potential uses. To maximize the facility's potential, the planning process combines existing master



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– Mayor Jon Costas

plans, feedback gathered from public engagement (with more opportunities planned) and the expertise of valued consultants.

"The sheer size and prime location offer incredible possibilities," said Costas, citing ideas such as interactive play areas, multi-sport spaces, intergenerational learning centers, community rental halls, and collaborations with public and private entities.

A specific area of focus is the potential relocation of Valpo Parks' senior programming. The current location, the Banta Activity Center, built a century ago, faces over \$3 million in critical structural repairs (more information at ValpoParks.org). The former McGill facility's size and central location could offer an ideal long-term solution for senior enrichment in Valparaiso.

The Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission brings valuable experience to this project, having successfully transformed the formerly underutilized Anco site into the Transit Center and Journeyman Distillery, thriving community assets.

Funding for the McGill facility's redevelopment will be strategically sourced through the remaining Sports Park bond funds, grant opportunities and public-private partnerships. The community is invited to participate in shaping the project's future by visiting ValpoParks.org for updates and upcoming input opportunities.

Dear Neighbors,

Summer is finally upon us and we look forward to many opportunities to gather as a community, like summer movie nights, summer concerts, the twice-weekly farmers market and the patriotic 4th of July Celebration. See all the details in this issue.



We're all seeing a lot of construction orange right now as another record paving year is underway – with improvements planned for more than 60 lane miles and more than a mile of sidewalks. We also see tremendous progress on the Valpo Parks rePLAY initiative, making \$10 million in improvements to 10 parks citywide. Watch for celebrations at a park near you as we reopen with new playgrounds, new pathways, new pickleball courts and many more enhancements.

Beyond the construction, we are also excited to be planning ahead, including the city's real-time crime prevention center which will use technology to add another layer of safety to our city. And we are so inspired by the possibilities at the former McGill factory as we investigate the best uses to serve the community. Look for more opportunities to share your own ideas.

Friends, I want to invite you to view an interview I recently did with Chris Mahlmann of GreatNews. Life to talk about recent events in Valparaíso, the importance of local leadership and ways the community can come together to make a positive difference. You may view it at tinyurl.com/ValpoLifeTalk. As we close this issue, I encourage you to get involved in Valpo. We hope to see you out there this summer!

Sincerely,

Jon Costas

Jon Costas, Mayor

COMMUNITY CONFERENCE CONNECTS

In April, the City of Valparaíso hosted its first-ever Community Conference, designed to connect individuals and organizations and promote community engagement. More than 150 residents, leaders and organizations came together. Mayor Jon Costas kicked off the day with a presentation about civility and respecting alternative points of view. Breakout sessions featured speakers on philanthropy, city government, neighbors helping neighbors and advocacy in action, and a speed networking session allowed civic organizations to introduce themselves and opportunities to get involved.

"Let's keep the positive momentum going. Get involved, stay engaged and help shape a bright future for Valparaíso," said Community Engagement Director Maggie Clifton, organizer of the event. To view a summary, including a video and script of Mayor Costas' keynote address, search "Community Conference" on [Valpo.us](https://valpo.us).



COUNCIL CORNER

*Featuring a member of the
Valparaíso City Council*

Jack Pupillo | City Council, District 4
Serving since 2020

Jack Pupillo has been a resident of Valparaíso since 2017, moving here from Lake County. His top priorities on the council revolve around being an accessible representative, putting public safety first, encouraging economic development and responsible growth. He and his wife, Carly Pupillo, are raising three children, Lucas, 5; Atticus, 3 and Penelope, 3. Pupillo serves the steel industry and is Vice President of Rubicon Refractories.

You can reach Jack Pupillo at JPupillo@valpo.us.





As part of the \$10 million rePLAY Initiative Valpo Parks recently celebrated the opening of the Byron Smith III Sports Complex at Fairgrounds Park, upgrading ball fields and adding new fencing, new dugouts and new seating for spectators, plus better quality and energy efficient lighting. Byron Smith III (1948-2024) served for more than 40 years as a softball umpire, inspiring players and fellow umpires alike as he officiated more than 10,000 games. The City of Valparaiso and Valpo Parks are grateful to Byron Smith III for his dedication and to Smith's family for their gift to support the project.

PARKS rePLAY INITIATIVE HITS FAST FORWARD

\$10 million in improvements in 10 parks citywide

Valpo Parks recently celebrated the opening of the Byron Smith III Sports Complex at Fairgrounds Park, plus many other enhancements to the park – part of the \$10 million rePLAY initiative improving 10 parks citywide, enhancing accessibility, safety and infrastructure while adding sustainability.

This summer rePLAY projects are hitting fast forward as construction accelerates on the six new pickleball courts at ValPLAYso Park, new playgrounds go in at Kirchhoff Park, Tower Park and Foundation Meadows Park, along with so many more upgrades citywide, like pathways and lighting

and restrooms. As construction continues, park visitors are already enjoying many completed rePLAY upgrades at parks like Rogers Lakewood Park, Ogden Botanical Gardens, Glenrose South Park, Will Park and Banta Park.

More ribbon cuttings are on the playlist as the improvements continue! To learn more about the rePLAY initiative and see a complete list of upgrades at all 10 parks, visit bit.ly/ValpoParksrePLAY or scan the QR code.



SCAN ME

CITY GOVERNMENT ACADEMY 2025

The 2025 City Government Academy has begun, assembling 30 residents to learn more about city government and become more engaged in Valparaiso. Participants gather on Wednesdays for seven weeks, tour city facilities and learn directly from the city's leadership team. More than 150 people have graduated from the academy, led by Maggie Clifton, Community Engagement Director. To learn more, including how to sign up, visit the Community Engagement page at Valpo.us.



RECORD PAVING SEASON UNDERWAY

The paving season is underway and for the second year running, the City of Valparaiso is launching its largest-ever paving season – appropriating \$9.4 million for an aggressive program including collector, arterial and neighborhood streets. “Prior to 2024, the City had been committing about \$3.5 million annually to road maintenance, which was a productive increase over the annual paving budget of just \$300,000 when I first took office 20 years ago. Certainly, costs have increased, but this aggressive annual budget of more than \$9 million, added to last year’s budget of \$8.8 million reflects a renewed priority on roadways,” said Mayor Jon Costas.

Last year’s paving program came in under budget, thanks to competitive bids, resulting in improvements to 42.3 lane miles, plus 21 lane miles of crack sealing and more than a mile of sidewalks. The 2025 paving program looks to improve 62 lane miles, plus 40 miles of crack sealing and more than a mile of sidewalks in sidewalk/pathway improvements. As part of this year’s efforts, the City will also test a new road preservation method, called Rejuvenation, on 3.5 lane miles of recently resurfaced streets to help extend their lifespan.

Evaluating Roadways

Roads are selected for paving based on the national PASER (Pavement Assessment Surface Evaluation Rating) rating system which 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.



View the Project List

A complete listing of roadway projects and schedule for work is available at tinyurl.com/ValpoWorks2025. To report a roadway or sidewalk that needs attention, visit valpo.us and enter your information at the “Voice a Concern” icon found on the homepage.

“The Engineering Dept combines PASER data with other factors such as functional classification and traffic levels to provide a recommendation. We are also aware of future projects pending with Valparaiso City Services and NIPSCO that might affect the timing of projects,” he said. “We work to maximize our funding for the best long-term results,” he said.

To view a short video about how paving decisions are made in Valparaiso, visit the Engineering page at [Valpo.us](https://valpo.us) and look under “Resources.”

2025 Project Highlight: City/County Partnership

The City of Valparaiso’s Engineering Dept has partnered with Porter County to fund much needed road improvements to Hayes-Leonard Road and Bartz Road, roadways that are shared between city and county jurisdiction. Both roads were candidates for paving based on their low PASER ratings and will see resurfacing this season with funding shared between City of Valparaiso and Porter County.

In addition to this partnered project, the City of Valparaiso is pleased to complete the extension of Goodrich Road (between Ransom and Vale Park roads) this season. As part of the City’s thoroughfare plan, created more than a decade ago, the extension will include a pathway on the west side and will also allow for improvements to the water main, adding better drainage and reliability for nearby residents.

Funding sources for the ambitious 2025 paving program include a \$1.5 million

Community Crossings matching grant awarded through the Indiana Department of Transportation, funds from the local road and street fund and the motor vehicle fund, along with a short-term bond which will not result in the need to raise any taxes or fees.

VPD ADVANCES REAL-TIME CRIME CENTER

Imagine a space where you could view live video from around the city, see active incidents in spots throughout the city and parks, and even relay time-sensitive information to responding officers. This technology is becoming a reality in real-time crime centers nationwide. The Valparaiso Police Department is preparing to be the first department in Porter County to open a real-time crime prevention center, a technology-filled space that provides live video from city-owned facilities along with real-time analytics, all designed to maximize public safety.

“Utilizing this technology will help us to put the right resources in the right places to continue providing the best in community safety,” said Valpo Police Chief Andrew McIntyre. Pursuing this advance in technology for safety is a strategy outlined by Mayor Jon Costas in his 2.0 plan for leadership. “The number one goal behind a real-time crime prevention center is to make it safer for our officers and our community – supporting the ability for officers to do their job effectively and safely as they deter and solve crimes. Valparaiso is a safe city and we are accredited by CALEA, the gold standard in police accreditation. With the support of technology and manpower, plus an engaged community, we’re working to maintain this level of safety for generations to come,” said McIntyre.

By accessing video from the real-time center, officers can spot a crime in action and monitor the path of an offender, allowing them to dispatch an officer aided by precise locations and descriptions. Further, the video footage can be used in court, aiding in the prosecution of suspects. As part of the technology, license plate readers can alert the center when a known suspect



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enters the city, allowing officers to track movements and apprehend dangerous individuals. Utilizing this technology during large city gatherings adds eyes and supports VPD efforts on site.

“We’ve done careful research into how these technology-based real-time centers are helping in other communities and we’ve incorporated the best ideas into our own system,” said McIntyre who recently attended an international technology conference held in Indianapolis. “We are in the process of reviewing policies of other leading police departments, ensuring that we are using the technology to its full potential while also respecting the privacy of our community,” he said. “We are taking the steps to ensure we are vigilant with the security of the system, complying carefully with Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) guidelines,” he said. The VPD hopes to have the center operational by January 1, 2026.

The VPD is also working to develop positive partnerships throughout the city,

inviting organizations and individuals to register their cameras to expand their own security. “We look to strengthen our partnerships with those we serve,” said McIntyre. “By working together, we can prevent crime, place visibility and officers where needed and keep our city safer every day,” said McIntyre.

The Safe Cam Program

To further support this technology-driven direction, the Valparaiso Police Department invites the community to get involved in keeping their immediate areas safer through their Safe Cam program. If you have a camera at your residence or business, you are invited to register your address and contact information with the VPD for possible use in crime solving near you. The Safe Cam program will not access your camera, but simply register its location so the VPD may reach out if information is needed. To register your camera(s), please email to RTCC@valpopd.com.

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SUMMER IN THE CITY

The City of Valparaiso is committed to hosting events for all ages! While you are downtown, please visit the unique offerings of restaurants and shops. To learn more about events, visit ValparaisoEvents.com and ValpoParks.org.

Summer Concert Series

Brought to you by Valparaiso Events

Bring your chairs and blankets and grab dinner from one of our amazing downtown restaurants. Pre-show entertainment begins at 5:30 pm, with the concert at 7:00 pm.

Location: Northwest Health Amphitheater, Central Park Plaza, Downtown Valparaiso

July 17 Rockology Chicago
July 24 The Dirty Buoys
July 31 Main Streets
August 7 Southtown Soul & Groove
August 14 Jessi & The Fizz
August 21 Mondo Cortez & The Chicago Blues Angels
August 28 Kashmir

Summer Outdoor Movies

Brought to you by Valparaiso Events

Bring your chairs and blankets as pre-movie fun begins at 5:30 pm, with the movie at 7:00 pm.

Location: Central Park Plaza, Downtown Valparaiso

June 3 Zootopia
June 10 Inside Out 2
June 17 The Parent Trap
June 24 Monsters, Inc.
July 1 Moana 2



Valparaiso Market

Brought to you by Valpo Parks

Come for farm-fresh produce, specialty goods, bakery items and live entertainment on Tuesdays and Saturdays from June 3 to October 11, 2025, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Location: William E. Urschel Pavilion at Central Park Plaza, Downtown Valparaiso

4th of July Celebration

Brought to you by Valpo Parks

Join the Valparaiso community for one of the best entertainment and fireworks shows in the area! Event kicks off at 5:00 pm with live music, food trucks and patriotic events leading up to the fireworks by ACE Pyro LLC at approximately 9:15 pm.

Location: Urschel field, Valparaiso Street and Vale Park Road.
Free event public parking at 2505 Valley Drive.

ROOTING FOR TREES



The damaging storm on March 30 caused much disruption throughout Valparaiso, including destroying many trees. Because the City of Valparaiso values its tree canopy, the City is offering reimbursement of up to \$100 per residence to help replace trees citywide, using the Valparaiso Tree Fund, administered by Valpo Parks.

Here's how it works:

- You may be reimbursed for 50% of the cost of a new tree – or 100% if the tree is replacing a tree destroyed in the March 30 storm – up to \$100 per residence per year.
- Trees must be selected from the approved list of trees that thrive in our area and are noninvasive.
- The property must be a single-family home, duplex, triplex or fourplex.

- Your tree may be planted on your residential site, including the parkway.
- Submit your receipt, within 90 days of purchase, to the Valpo Parks office.
- You must be a Valparaiso City resident paying city taxes to be eligible.

For complete details, including the reimbursement form, visit tinyurl.com/ValpoTrees.