

For Immediate Release**Media:** visit bit.ly/ValpoForAllGenerations for more information and high-resolution images**Valparaiso Announces Parks Initiative for All Generations**

In an initiative called “Valpo for All Generations,” the City of Valparaiso and Valpo Parks have introduced a bold plan to expand and upgrade parks and programming that will serve all ages for generations to come. Mayor Matt Murphy led the presentation by announcing that the City has purchased 248 acres east of 49, extending from Vale Park Road north to 500 North, for a community sports and recreation complex to include sports fields, walking paths with wooded trails, shelters, concessions and perhaps an indoor facility.

“Parks define us, gather us together, encourage wellness, promote family engagement, and celebrate the outdoor environment. A strong parks network demonstrates our shared priorities for people and places. Valparaiso has long embraced its parks,” said Murphy. “Since day one of my administration, we have been working to expand the city’s quality of life. I’ve said many times that a youth sports facility is a priority. I’m happy to kick off a bright new plan to enhance parks across all generations with the announcement of this new park,” he said.

Parks Director John Seibert outlined the process that led to the new plans. “Over the past year and a half Parks has been engaged in a Master Plan process and specific task forces seeking public input and consulting with local and national experts in parks facilities and programming,” he said, sharing that the outreach efforts resulted in more than 2,000 responses, including focus groups, surveys and public meetings, in person and virtually. “Valpo for All Generations is the result of these ideas coming together. After reviewing all the ideas, four priorities clearly emerged,” he said.

The four priorities have become the pillars of the Valpo for All Generations. They include:

1. Legacy Parks

This includes continued investment in current beloved Valparaiso parks and pathways throughout the city with particular emphasis on upgrades at familiar favorites like Lakewood Park, Kirchhoff, and Ogden Gardens/Forest Park.

2. Adult Center for Enrichment (ACE)

A center dedicated to enriching the lives of adults through activities, education, and a connection to community resources with a fresh and vibrant approach. After much review and research, this center is planned for the city’s north side at the site of the former Whispering Pines Nursing Home. Based on community input and research, plans include a bright facility with indoor and outdoor spaces, including gathering areas, flexible spaces for lifelong learning, fitness areas, a mini health clinic, fire pit area, walking track and more.

Our City...Our Values

Honestly Accountable Surprisingly Responsive Boldly Proactive Creatively Frugal Respectfully Compassionate

3. **Valparaiso Next Generation Skate Park**

With many already “on board,” this much-anticipated project is scheduled to begin construction at Fairgrounds Park as community fundraising reaches its aspirational goals. Designed by world-class skatepark designer (and Valparaiso native) Dug Ketterman, plans call for a covered and lighted skatepark, extending hours and seasons of use, as well as an accessible space for adaptive athletes – all in a high-profile area near the recreation at Fairgrounds Park and the new Boys and Girls Club.

4. **Community Sports and Recreation Complex**

The newest addition was high on the community’s wish list. The 248-acre site offers abundant property to create the space often described in community “wants” -- multipurpose sports fields, playgrounds, shelters, concessions, nature areas and perhaps an indoor facility and more. The park will be the city’s largest park and will be designed and created with community input.

“Making these bold ideas a reality will be a challenge, but Valparaiso continues to prove that we’re up to the challenge,” said Seibert. “Our community came together to build ValPLAYso in 1994 and then 20 years later did it again, even better, with ValPLAYso the Next Generation, gathering 3,000 volunteers and \$1 million in private donations. Together, private-public partnerships led by the Redevelopment Commission, Parks and the City created our beloved Central Park Plaza. We’ve had private-public partnerships make dreams become reality with wonderful venues like Creekside Trails, ValPAWraiso Dog Park and Samardzija Field at Tower Park,” he said.

The City of Valparaiso and Parks are looking for additional public input and partnership for the transformational projects of the Valpo for All Generations initiative. Upcoming open houses will provide more information and outline opportunities to get involved.

Learn More and Get Involved

The City of Valparaiso and Valpo Parks are looking forward to moving Valpo for All Generations forward by engaging the community to gather further ideas, form partnerships, gather volunteers and raise funds to elevate each project. To learn more, the public is invited to attend **Open Houses at Forest Park Golf Course’s Welter Room (1155 Sheffield Dr.) at 5:00 pm each night:**

March 7: Legacy Parks

March 8: Community Sports & Recreation Complex

March 9: Adult Center for Enrichment

To learn more about each project of the Valpo for All Generations initiative and to sign up for updates and opportunities to get involved, visit bit.ly/ValpoForAllGenerations