

## City Council to Consider New Rates to Sustain Valparaiso Trash and Recycling Service

After a thorough review of its trash and recycling service as well as competitive data, the City of Valparaiso has announced a proposed rate increase to make the service sustainable. “We’ve analyzed efficiencies and compared our rates to other communities. The cost of providing quality service has increased over the years due to fuel, equipment, landfill, regulatory and labor costs, combined with a volatility in the market for recyclables,” said Steve Poulos, Director of Valparaiso City Services. The City of Valparaiso has not increased its trash and recycling rates since 2012.

The proposed rate change would increase monthly fees to \$19.50, beginning with October 2022 bills which are payable in November. “We looked for ways to make our operations more efficient and we compared our rates with communities throughout the region. We learned that Valparaiso’s \$12.00 monthly fee was the lowest in the region. Even with the increase, the new rate is below average for Northwest Indiana,” said Poulos.

Nationwide, trash and recycling services are seeing substantial increases in costs as fuel, labor and landfill fees increase. At the same time, the recycling market continues to be volatile, and funds generated by selling recycled waste are erratic. In fact, the same loads of recycling that once generated revenue for communities are costing more to collect than the credits the city once received. “There is always an environmental value to recycling but the reality is that the financial return is very unpredictable,” said Poulos.

Before establishing the rate increase, Valparaiso City Services assembled a committee to study efficiencies, competitive data and the potential impact of privatizing trash and recycling collection. VCS has sent information on the proposed rate increase via US mail to all affected Valparaiso residents and has posted details at [www.valpo.us](http://www.valpo.us). VCS also consulted a financial analysis by Baker Tilly, LLP to gain insight into budgetary needs to provide service, plus an internal audit of operations and efficiencies.

Since 2020, Valparaiso City Services has consolidated the services of Valparaiso City Utilities and Valparaiso Public Works to maximize efficiencies. A central Customer Service Center is now located at 205 Billings St. with a single phone number to serve all customer needs at (219) 462-6174. Customers may also reach Valparaiso City Services online at [Valpo.us](http://Valpo.us).

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### Our City...Our Values

Honestly Accountable Surprisingly Responsive Boldly Proactive Creatively Frugal Respectfully Compassionate

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