



Valparaiso Awarded \$1.5 million in Community Crossing Funds

The City of Valparaiso has been awarded the maximum \$1.5 million in Community Crossings grant funds through the Indiana Department of Transportation, announced Governor Eric Holcomb. Together with newly appropriated funding for roadways, the City of Valparaiso will embark on its largest-ever paving season, with an ambitious \$8.8 million in roadway projects for 2024, more than double of the previous year's budget.

"We're very pleased to be looking ahead to more roadway improvements than ever, assisted by this grant and further appropriations. This aggressive budget reflects a renewed priority on roadways," said Mayor Jon Costas, recalling that when he first took office 20 years ago, the roadway budget was just \$300,000. "This renewed priority is not just for 2024. We intend to keep making streets a priority," he said.

In addition to the Community Crossings matching grant, the 2024 budget includes funds the Valparaiso City Council has approved in appropriating from the local road and street fund, riverboat funds and the motor vehicle fund, with no need to raise any taxes or fees. While the list of roadways selected for work continues to evolve, decisions are made using a variety of information, such as usage, condition and cost. In addition, Valparaiso's Engineering Department is uniquely aware of future projects pending with Valparaiso City Utilities and NIPSCO that would require disruption of the roadway.

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.

"The PASER system attempts to provide objective criteria and is beneficial in choosing the right application for the right road at the right time," said City Engineer Max Rehlander. "Each year, the Engineering Dept assesses the road condition via PASER; then combines that with other factors such as functional classification and amount of traffic to provide a recommendation. We try to maximize our funding for the best long-term results," he said.

A listing of roadway projects and schedule for work will be available on the City of Valparaiso's website in coming weeks.