

## YOUR VALPARAISO *by the numbers*

We begin a new decade with a new team and new opportunities to make our efforts count (see Census 2020 on page 4).

**Here are some interesting benchmarks for your City of Valparaiso.**



### FINANCES

**\$4.4 million**

is currently in the City of Valparaiso's Rainy-Day fund, available for emergencies and to reduce debt required in borrowing funds

**15**

The number of Indiana communities with the same AA bond rating (or better) than the City of Valparaiso

### PUBLIC WORKS



**162 miles** of city streets to plow, clean and maintain

**9.92 miles of city streets resurfaced or repaved in 2019**

**1.5 miles** of sidewalks repaired or installed in 2019



### UTILITIES

**13,000 accounts served annually**

**500+ miles** of water, sewer and stormwater pipes serve the city

**1.6 billion gallons of water** supplied to Valparaiso customers in 2019



### PARKS

**19 parks** plus the ValPAWraiso Dog Park, opening this year

**22+ miles of pathways**

**75 years** of service to Valparaiso



### FIRE

**4,912 calls** for the Valparaiso Fire Department in 2019, including 3,600+ calls for ambulance

**2**

The VFD's Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating, putting Valpo among just 12 fire departments in Indiana to achieve this high standard, which contributes to low insurance rates for homeowners



### POLICE

**2% reduction in major crime** for 2019

**1 in 19** The VPD is 1 of just 19 departments in Indiana accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA)



Dear Neighbors,

Thank you for the confidence and support that we've received as we begin a

new administration and decade in Valparaiso. Though I've served the city for many years in a variety of ways, including on the City Council and as Economic Director, I'm honored to serve as your mayor as we move into another exciting season for the city.

I was pleased to present my first State of the City address early this year, and I'm happy to share that the city is strong. We're a safe city with excellent services and infrastructure, and sound finances. We share some benchmarks with you on page one of this issue of City Talk and look forward to building on this success.

We're also pleased to introduce some new members of the city's leadership team. We're excited to have assembled such extraordinary talent and eager to get started. It's motivating to be working from a newly updated City Hall with a team as excited as we are.

As we begin this new decade and this new administration, we want to underscore that we have begun by listening. We're committed to enhancing the very things that make Valparaiso an amazing city. Here's to a positive new decade for Valparaiso!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew R. Murphy".

Matt Murphy, Mayor



## VALPO PARKS BOARD *Celebrates 75 Years*

2020 marks the 75th Anniversary of the Valpo Parks Board. In addition to festivities celebrating the 75th Anniversary, 2020 will also include an update of the Valpo Parks 5-Year Master Plan -- a comprehensive plan to identify the needs and interests of the community. Information will be gathered through online surveys, focus groups, public forums and other strategic meetings. Valpo Parks has partnered with GreenPlay, a leading Parks and Recreation consulting firm based in Louisville, Colorado. GreenPlay has recently completed similar plans for Bloomington and South Bend Parks.

### 2020 MASTER PLAN

For additional information on the Master Plan, including opportunities for involvement, visit [www.valpoparks.org](http://www.valpoparks.org) and follow Valpo Parks on Facebook at ValpoParks.

## NEIGHBORHOOD *Workshops*

Mayor Matt Murphy kicked off the year's first Neighborhood Workshop in February — bringing together 40 neighbors from 15 different neighborhoods. Hosted by Director of Community Engagement Maggie Clifton, these workshops are an opportunity to learn more about city services and ways to connect your community. *Mark your calendar for the next workshops:*

- April 28, featuring Building Commissioner Vicki Thrasher
- July 15, featuring Police Chief Jeff Balon and Fire Chief Chad Dutz
- Nov. 15, featuring Public Works

For details to attend, visit the "Community Engagement" page at [Valpo.us](http://Valpo.us) or contact Maggie Clifton at 219-462-1161 or [mclifton@valpo.us](mailto:mclifton@valpo.us).



# INTRODUCING *New Members of our city leadership team*

**Brandon Dickinson**  
*Redevelopment Director*



Brandon Dickinson most recently served as Business Development Director for Luke Family of Brands and was formerly the Director of Economic Development for the City of Fishers, Indiana where he assisted in bringing more than \$250 million in new investments and more than 3,500 new jobs. He is a graduate of Indiana University and earned his law degree from Regent University.

**Mike Jabo**  
*Director of Engineering*



Mike Jabo brings extensive engineering experience in both the public and private sector. He worked with the Indiana Department of Transportation for more than a decade and has spent the last 25 years as manager of the Northwest Indiana Division of DLZ, a national leader in engineering consulting, where he specialized in public infrastructure projects.

**Mike Jessen**  
*City Administrator*



Mike Jessen brings more than 28 years of corporate and community leadership experience, including 22 years as Executive Vice President for Aldi's tri-state Valparaiso division. He has also served on the Porter County Council since 2014, and is active in a number of volunteer roles, including with the Union Township School Board and the Porter County Community Foundation. He holds a degree in business administration from Truman State University.

**Marci Palmer**  
*Executive Assistant to Mayor Murphy*



Marci Palmer brings the experience of serving as Executive Assistant for Aldi's tri-state division in Valparaiso for more than 25 years where she was involved in key projects and events as the company expanded. She will assist the City of Valparaiso in a leadership role, supporting the efforts of the mayor and city administrator, and serving as a communication liaison.

**Beth Shrader**  
*Director of Planning and Transit*



Beth Shrader formerly served as Director of Community Development and Planning for the City of LaPorte. She is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and earned a master's degree from Ball State University. Her diverse background includes working with the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission, a law firm and several nonprofit organizations. She is also fluent in Spanish.

**Holly Taylor**  
*Clerk Treasurer*



Holly Taylor has worked in Valparaiso's Clerk Treasurer's office for more than seven years. She was elected in November to succeed Sharon Swihart who served as Valparaiso's Clerk Treasurer for 37 years. Taylor is a graduate of Purdue University with more than 16 years of experience in the financial sector. She is committed to financial responsibility and transparency.

## **Bill Oeding** Recognized as Distinguished Hoosier

City Administrator Bill Oeding was recently recognized by Governor Eric Holcomb with a Distinguished Hoosier award for his significant contributions to the community.

"Bill's fingerprints are all over many of Valparaiso's most notable projects," said former Mayor Jon Costas. "Projects like Central Park Plaza simply would not have happened without the efforts of Bill Oeding," he said. Oeding has served as City Administrator since 2009 and remains on the city's transition team. He has also served the City as Public Works Director and in leadership for the Valpo Parks.





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#HoosiersCountIN2020  
**2020 Census**  
It's easy: online, paper or phone

## Everyone Counts

### 2020 Census Impacts Funding for the Future

The Census is coming and it's important for everyone to count. Taken every ten years, the Census is an official head count of all residents. The results help determine how the federal government distributes more than \$675 billion in government funding, as well as representation in Washington, D.C.

"By making sure you're counted, you help ensure that our community continues to compete well for funding opportunities, including dollars for public safety, schools, senior services and more," said Mayor Matt Murphy.

Census forms will be mailed to homes by the end of March. You can respond online, by mail or by phone. The form takes only minutes to complete, the results are completely confidential and can only be used to produce statistics. For more information, visit [2020Census.gov](https://2020Census.gov).

United States<sup>®</sup>  
**Census 2020** **Indiana**



### Introducing **Home Team Valpo**

Mayor Matt Murphy has announced the launch of Home Team Valpo, a city-inspired, volunteer-run effort to assist qualifying homeowners in maintaining their homes. The first Home Team Valpo event will be a Spring Cleanup on May 16. Homeowners may apply for help with exterior clean-up efforts at their residences and volunteer groups may sign up to participate. Stay tuned for details on the city's Facebook page, Valparaiso Now.



### **Be a good neighbor!**

Valparaiso Maintenance Code prohibits parking in the grass in a front yard or over public sidewalks.



#### Check us out!

Use this code with your smartphone to access the city's site or visit [www.valpo.us](https://www.valpo.us)



Find us on Facebook by searching for **Valparaiso Now**

VISIT [www.valpo.us](https://www.valpo.us) FOR CITY NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS