



## On Deck: The Valpo Sports & Recreation Campus

Nature hikes, pickleball matches, sports tournaments and outdoor concerts are among the highlights of plans for Valparaiso's newest and largest park, the Valpo Sports & Recreation Campus. "This new park complements what we have and adds so many uses our community has wished for the future," said Mayor Matt Murphy. "We look forward to making the very most of this space, serving all ages, interests and abilities," he said.

The Valpo Sports & Recreation Campus will be located on 248 acres just east of State Road 49, extending from Vale Park Road (400 North) north to Burlington Beach Road (500 North). Plans include spaces for both passive (unprogrammed/nature) and active (programmable/ athletic) use, accentuating the property's rolling and wooded terrain and water features.

"This transformative project has been designed by our community and for our community," said Valpo Parks Executive Director John Seibert. "We've hosted many input sessions and opportunities to submit ideas. From these sessions, we formed a collective goal: to develop a high-quality sports and recreation campus for everyone, regardless of age, skill, ability or interest. The community articulated five main goals which have driven the plans we see today," he said.

Plans for the campus include spaces for both passive (unprogrammed, recreational) and active (programmable, structured) spaces. Elements include:

### North

Because of the relatively level nature of the terrain, the northern portion will

be more dedicated to active spaces, including:

- Sports fields using an innovative overlay concept that allows the fields to be quickly converted to a variety of sports, such as baseball, football, soccer, lacrosse, ultimate frisbee and more, using variable markings and movable fencing
- Lighting and turf to extend play for longer days and seasons
- A main entrance with parking distributed to serve individual fields
- Gathering spaces with concessions, restrooms and shade

### South

Because of the rolling, wooded and scenic nature of the terrain, the southern portion will be more dedicated to passive, recreational spaces, ultimately including:

- Trails highlighting the rolling and

Dear Neighbors,

As we wrap up another year in Valparaiso, there's much to be grateful for. I'm grateful to see us completing an ambitious year of pavement projects, including resurfacing, sidewalks and pathways, plus roadway-extending strategies.

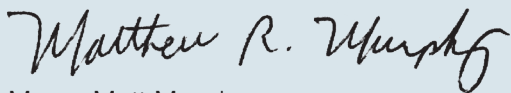
The work we see this season will enhance roadways, alleys, sidewalks and pathways for seasons to come. Plus, we've added safety upgrades, like speed radar signs, and flashing beacons, based on public feedback. It's also rewarding to drive by Tower Park and see the City's original water tower sparkling, ready to serve for decades to come.

I'm grateful Valpo was awarded an AA bond rating from Standard & Poors, placing us among the top 20 municipalities in Indiana. The superior rating demonstrates strong financial performance, stable revenue and conservative expenditure management. I thank our Clerk-Treasurer Holly Taylor and her staff for their excellent management and the City Council for their sound oversight.

In other highlights, I'm pleased to share the details for the Valpo Sports & Recreation Campus, Valpo's newest and largest park. We're very excited to share plans for this park with the community because the design was truly driven by the community. We're designing this park to work as hard as Valpo does – with multi-use fields that allow us to use them many ways, lights and turf to extend the playtime, and elements that appeal to all ages and abilities – including pickleball!

As exciting as 2022 has been, 2023 holds even more – the opening of Journeyman, Parks progress and downtown upgrades to make Valpo an even better place to live, play and do business. I wish you the best of the season.

Sincerely,



Mayor Matt Murphy



## City Services Studies Utility Rates

Valparaiso City Services has initiated a study to examine the needs across the utility to ensure the ongoing modernization of infrastructure, environmental sustainability, regulatory compliance and a healthy financial position over the next several years, announced Steve Poulos, Executive Director for VCS. "The City and VCS constantly review overall utility operations and needs to ensure we're providing reliable service and value for our community," said Poulos.

Like most communities nationwide, the City of Valparaiso and VCS are working to upgrade utility infrastructure to ensure long-term reliability. Major components of the water and water reclamation treatment systems are between 35 to 50 years old and nearing the end of operational effectiveness. Further, public utilities are monitored by regulatory bodies that require facilities to maintain environmental compliance and efficiency standards.

VCS will be forming a Steering Committee to assist in evaluating rate structures across the utility with a priority on providing the funding for essential operational and capital improvements while maintaining a sound financial position for VCS. "Utility rates are directly affected by increases due to inflation, power, labor, chemical and fuel costs, plus the need for maintenance and capital improvements to our existing infrastructure," said Poulos. More information will be available as the committee assembles data.



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scenic terrain, including water views and, ultimately, a championship-level cross country course to be used by local teams

- Accessible playgrounds with restrooms
- An outdoor community plaza connecting the recreational and athletic spaces, including an open-air pavilion, pickleball courts and, ultimately, a medical/training facility, expanded concession options and an administrative building
- Potentially additional turf fields with spacious bleachers and a larger scoreboard which could host championship-level games and accommodate a temporary stage for concerts and events

### Where Valpo Wins

“The goal for this park is for every parent or sibling to raise their hand and offer to take their brother or sister to practice because the new Valpo Sports & Rec Campus is a place where everyone will want to go,” said Assistant Parks Director Kevin Nuppnau. “The new park will be an opportunity for Valpo families to participate in so many activities without the need to travel,” he said.

In addition to the athletic, recreation and engagement benefits for the community, the new park offers pond and wetland space that may be used to enhance stormwater management. Further, there is room to add replacement wells for the future. “The ability to add capacity to the City’s water utilities is another significant and lasting benefit for this forward-thinking park,” said Murphy.



### Economic Impact

The Valpo Sports & Recreation Campus is estimated to be a \$30 million project, accomplished with the support of state and federal funding and without the need to raise taxes or tap the City’s rainy-day fund.

An added component of the project will be the extension of Memorial Drive through the property to 400 N/Vale Park Road, unlocking opportunities for private development of property surrounding the park. “The park will be a catalyst that will drive additional economic development east of 49 as it also attracts new business and added customers to our community,” said George Douglas, Valpo’s Director of Development. “We look for the park to contribute to growing the city’s assessed valuation, adding jobs and investment in the area,” he said.

Feasibility studies and project pro forma indicate a positive economic impact in direct and indirect spending sparked by the new campus. “Our intention is to make our own community the priority for this park. Certainly, the space offers opportunities to host events and bring added revenue, but we are designing this space with our own community’s wants and needs as the template,”

said Murphy. “We’ve worked to cover all the bases, offering a wide variety of uses for all ages and interests, sparking economic development, maximizing the seasons with lights and turf and committing spaces for stormwater and utility use. We are truly maximizing the use of this property for today and the future,” he said.

### The Timing

Designs and budgets for the transformative park are being finalized, with plans to begin construction on the property in 2023, with substantial completion by summer of 2024. The extension of Memorial Drive is also planned for 2023.

### The Big Picture

The Valpo Sports & Recreation Campus is part of the City’s larger focus on Valpo for All Generations, which includes support for existing legacy parks, a state-of-the-art skate park and a center for adult enrichment. “The Valpo Sports & Recreation Campus is a long-term project, one that will extend beyond any one mayor or city council, with new elements added as capacity allows,” Murphy said. “With an eye toward the future, the city has secured the property ... to provide a special place for generations in much the same way that Central Park Plaza, the Urschel Pavilion, ValPlayso and other Valpo parks elevate our quality of life.”

To learn more and see plans for the Valpo Sports & Recreation Campus, visit [bit.ly/ValpoForAllGenerations](https://bit.ly/ValpoForAllGenerations).

# Valparaiso Offers Neighborhood Grants for 2023



**Pepper Creek** - Neighbors in the Courtyards of Pepper Creek recently celebrated the opening of their new Courtyard Commons, a gathering space created with neighborhood inspiration and supported by a Neighborhood Improvement Grant. The City is accepting applications for 2023 grants through March 1, 2023. Neighborhoods may submit applications for up to \$15,000 in qualified funding through the Neighborhood Improvement Grant. Scan the code below to learn how your neighborhood can apply.

The City of Valparaiso is inviting neighborhoods to submit applications for the annual Neighborhood Improvement Grant program, announced Maggie Clifton, Valparaiso’s Community Engagement Director. **Applications for the upcoming grant cycle will be due on March 1, 2023**, with grant recipients announced by March 10, 2023.

“The Neighborhood Improvement Grant program has succeeded in funding 79 projects since we introduced the program in 2018,” said Clifton. “The City is delighted to lead this program which unites neighborhoods and inspires positive projects. With matching funds, these grants have resulted in more than \$1 million in neighborhood improvements over the past five years,” she said. Neighborhood Improvement Grants are funded by the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission.

Neighborhood Improvement Grants help neighbors come together for common goals. Previous projects awarded Neighborhood Improvement Grants have included:

- Community spaces, like bus stop benches and pavilions for gathering
- Neighborhood signage/branding that instills unity and a sense of pride
- Public art displays that add unique character by representing the neighborhood
- Physical improvements, like fixing sidewalks or enhancing park equipment



## Mayor’s Youth Council 2022-23

The City of Valparaiso has welcomed the Mayor’s Youth Council for 2022-23. The 16 new members, currently in their junior year at Valparaiso High School, will meet monthly throughout the school year, learning from city leaders, volunteering for civic activities and cultivating leadership skills. The Mayor’s Youth Council was introduced in 2021 with support from Valparaiso High School.

To learn more about the Mayor’s Youth Council, visit the Mayor’s page at Valpo.us.



# City of Valparaiso Presents Funds to Nonprofits

The City of Valparaiso is presenting funds to local nonprofits serving the Valparaiso community as part of the adopted plan under the American Rescue Plan Act. “When planning the distribution of the funds, we looked to organizations that served many members of our community hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic – children, families, first responders, people with disabilities and others facing hardship,” said Mayor Matt Murphy.

Organizations receiving ARPA funding through the City of Valparaiso include Boys & Girls Club of Greater Northwest Indiana, The Caring Place, Dressed for School, Hilltop Neighborhood House, MAAC Foundation, Opportunity Enterprises, Respite House and both the Valparaiso Police and Valparaiso Fire departments.

Earlier this year, organizations were invited to share their thoughts for use of the ARPA funds at a City Council meeting, highlighting many positive initiatives. The Boys & Girls Club shared that they would use the grant for their newly opened \$9 million facility on Evans Avenue, serving more than 1,000 youths in Valparaiso. Dressed for School planned to expand their ability to provide school clothes for hundreds of Valparaiso school children, perhaps enabling them to provide a second pair of shoes for each child. The MAAC Foundation, a training campus for first responders, intends to use the funding to expand an indoor training facility to support police and fire departments throughout the region. Each organization expressed ways they continue to support the Valparaiso community, providing support for those seeking substance abuse treatment, victims of domestic violence, residents with disabilities and people of all ages.

Beyond these nonprofit distributions, Valparaiso’s plan for ARPA funding allocates funds to a variety of community needs, including premium pay for eligible City workers who performed essential work during COVID and supporting a community-wide Valpo for All Generations initiative which will include a 248-acre park and community sports complex on the east side of Route 49, as well as a new Adult Center for Enrichment to be constructed on North Calumet Avenue, near the current Pines Village Retirement Community and Valparaiso Family YMCA.

“We’ve worked to balance needs and support organizations that serve Valparaiso. We have been listening to public input through online surveys, in-person events and conversations with residents. These interactions confirm that Valparaiso has many good and worthy organizations. Many creative ideas,” said Murphy. “After compensating all essential workers with an emphasis towards employees involved with public safety, we’ve chosen projects and organizations that will have the greatest positive impact going forward. Projects and organizations that will greatly serve current and future generations.”

“We look forward to continued partnerships with these fine nonprofit organizations and thank the Valparaiso community for working together during the pandemic and beyond,” said Murphy. To learn more, visit [Valpo.us](http://Valpo.us).



## **MAAC Foundation**

*Mayor Matt Murphy and City Council President Casey Schmidt present the MAAC Foundation with funds to support their work in supporting first responders. Pictured (left to right) are City Council President Casey Schmidt, Valparaiso Fire Chief Chad Dutz, Valparaiso Police Chief Jeff Balon, Mayor Murphy, MAAC Foundation President Celina Weatherwax and MAAC Foundation Founder Stewart McMillan.*

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## Report a Concern or Initiate Service



To better serve Valparaiso residents, the City of Valparaiso has introduced Valpo Voice, a helpful way to report a concern and initiate service. “Valpo Voice is a way for residents to contact us quickly and let the city team know about concerns from a utility disruption to a fallen sign to a pothole or traffic light outage,” said Mayor Matt Murphy. “The Valpo Voice web page is designed to make it easier for residents to alert us for a quick response,” he said.

The addition of Valpo Voice complements the city’s recent consolidation of Utilities and Public Works into a single unified department, enhancing efficiency and service. To report a concern or initiate service using Valpo Voice, simply:

1. Visit the City of Valparaiso website at [Valpo.us](http://Valpo.us).
2. Click the green “Voice a Concern” icon located near the top of the site.
3. Enter your information for an automated response. Your concern will be routed directly to the appropriate department, 24/7.
4. In the event of an emergency please continue to utilize our consolidated customer service center at (219) 462-6174.

## AlertMedia Keeps You In-the-Know

*Update your contact information to  
receive important alerts in real time*

Whether there’s an emergency or a scheduled event that may affect your service, The City’s AlertMedia service can deliver alerts in real time, using text, email or voice call.

“We’ve found the AlertMedia system to be very helpful in communicating to a targeted audience and we’re asking people to make sure their information is current so we can reach them quickly,” said Valparaiso City Services Executive Director Steve Poulos. “In many cases, the information we have on file may have been shared with us when an account was established, decades ago. Customers may have eliminated a land line or wish to include an email address. Updating the information is easy and helpful.”

To Ensure Timely Alerts:

1. Scan this QR code to visit the sign-up page at [tinyurl.com/ValpoAlert](http://tinyurl.com/ValpoAlert).
2. Share your current information using the online form. You will receive a confirmation when it has been submitted.
3. Alerts to your phone will come from (219) 300-1822. It may be helpful to save this number in your phone.

