

City Adds Solar Power *for Sustainability and Savings*



The City has a successful history of environmental stewardship and energy efficiency. A total of 772 solar panels were installed at five City facilities, including historic City Hall, estimated to save taxpayers more than \$5.2 million dollars in electrical costs over the life of the panels, not including any additional savings based on surplus energy produced.

The City of Valparaiso has added 772 solar panels to five City facilities, saving taxpayers more than \$5.2 million in electrical costs over the life of the panels, not including any additional savings based on surplus energy produced. “The City has a successful history of environmental stewardship and energy efficiency. We have had our sights on solar for years. Now that wattage for solar panels has increased over time, and prices have stabilized, solar makes financial and environmental sense for the City,” said Steve Poulos, Executive Director for Valparaiso City Services.

The panels have been installed at the city’s three treatment plants, the City Services building on Joliet Road

and at City Hall on Lincolnway, at a total cost of about \$800,000. Yet, the panels will save taxpayers more than \$145,000 annually in electrical costs, paying for the project in just over six years, while creating clean energy.

“Utilities have long been some of the City of Valparaiso’s largest expenses, so we’re very pleased to find ways of offsetting these costs and providing renewable energy,” said Mayor Matt Murphy. “We also appreciate that our City Hall may be more than 100 years old, but it will be powered with the latest in solar technology,” he said, noting that the solar panels are not visible from the street view, preserving the historic appearance of the building.

Energy efficiency has long been a priority for Valparaiso City Services, which includes both the utilities and public works divisions. “Over the past 10 years, the city has been investing in energy efficient equipment and systems so that we could hold our electrical use steady while adding significant services for a growing customer base,” said Poulos. “While Valparaiso City Utilities has continued to pay more per kilowatt hour and expand services to more residents and businesses, our electrical cost per gallon of use has remained fairly stable due to our ongoing efforts in energy efficiency. The introduction of solar will further advance these energy efficiency goals.”

Dear Neighbors,

The summer season is heating up and so are projects around our city. This newsletter shares many highlights: We're looking forward to seeing the Lincoln Highway Garage and The Linc take shape, checking important boxes for our downtown as demand for housing and parking continue to grow. We're all eager to see Journeyman's American Factory gather us in, along with the connections to the new Barrel District that expands our downtown south.



Combining old with new is a continuing theme in our community. The Valparaíso for All Generations initiative at Valpo Parks highlights new projects, like the Valpo Sports & Recreation Campus, Flounder & Friends Skatepark and ACE with our beloved legacy parks that will always be neighborhood gems.

We're also celebrating projects like the addition of solar power to City facilities, saving on energy costs and providing renewable energy for years to come. We're working together to become better recyclers and we're polishing our own ideas as neighbors in projects funded by Neighborhood Improvement grants. We're also celebrating each other in events like the recent Disability Awareness Month.

As the season moves forward, I hope you'll find time to enjoy some summer fun in signature events hosted by Valparaíso Events – find their schedule at ValparaísoEvents.com. I look forward to working and playing hard this summer. There's much to enjoy in Valparaíso!

Sincerely,

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

Mayor Matt Murphy

City Highlights Disability Awareness Month



John J. Watkins, *The Times of Northwest Indiana*

The City of Valparaíso strives to be a welcoming city where diversity is appreciated and viewed as a strength. As part of this appreciation, the City recognized March as Disability Awareness Month, featuring speakers and screenings and book discussions as well as resources to make us all better allies. "As a community, Disability Awareness Month is about sharing information and support – initiating conversations we intend to build on," said Mayor Matt Murphy.

The monthlong event included a Spotlight event featuring Jason Benetti, nationally recognized sports play-by-play announcer for Fox and the Chicago White Sox who has cerebral palsy. Benetti shared insights into how to be an ally to the disabled community.

Other highlights of Disability Awareness Month included a screening of the film *Teacher of Patience* at Valparaíso University, book club recommendations and discussions at the Valparaíso Public Library, outreach events hosted by the Valparaíso Chamber, Valparaíso Rotary and Valpo Noon Kiwanis. The City also shared online resources, including an Ally Toolkit to help us all think more carefully about our interactions with others, as well as an accessible parking map.

Disability Awareness Month was created and managed by the Advisory Human Relations Council's Disability Awareness and Inclusion Subcommittee and supported by community partners Ivy Tech Community College, Kiwanis Club of Valparaíso, Kyle's Legacy, Opportunity Enterprises, Porter County Public Library System, Valparaíso Rotary, Valparaíso University and Valpo Chamber. Sponsors included NIPSCO, HealthLinc, Horizon Bank, Tonn and Blank Construction, Franciscan Alliance, Luke Family of Brands, Lyp Family, Mullet Family Honey, Clifton Family and Community Healthcare System – St. Mary Medical Center.

The Advisory Human Relations Council was established in 2011 to advance inclusion in Valparaíso. To learn more about Disability Awareness and Inclusion in Valparaíso, visit tinyurl.com/ValpoDAI.

Upcoming Upgrades

Valparaiso has much to look forward to in a number of exciting projects, representing significant investment in the future of our community:

The Linc

Located at the northwest corner of Lincolnway and Morgan, The Linc will include three buildings, offering a total of 121 modern apartment homes with retail opportunities on the ground floors. Apartments will feature in-demand amenities, such as high-end appliances, in-unit laundry, outdoor patios, a fitness center, coffee bar and shared courtyard. The Linc is being developed by Hageman, a proven Indiana developer that is investing more than \$30 million in the project, supported by more than \$5 million in Indiana Tax Credits and \$3 million in TIF funding through the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission. Construction will begin this summer and is expected to take approximately 18 months.



Lincoln Highway Garage

The Lincoln Highway Garage will add 362 parking spaces to the northeast corner of Lincolnway and Morgan, serving The Linc apartments and neighboring businesses and residents. The garage will be four stories tall and designed to fit the historic character of the downtown. This is a City of Valparaiso project, representing an investment of more than \$12 million. Construction is expected to begin in May and complete in approximately 12 months.



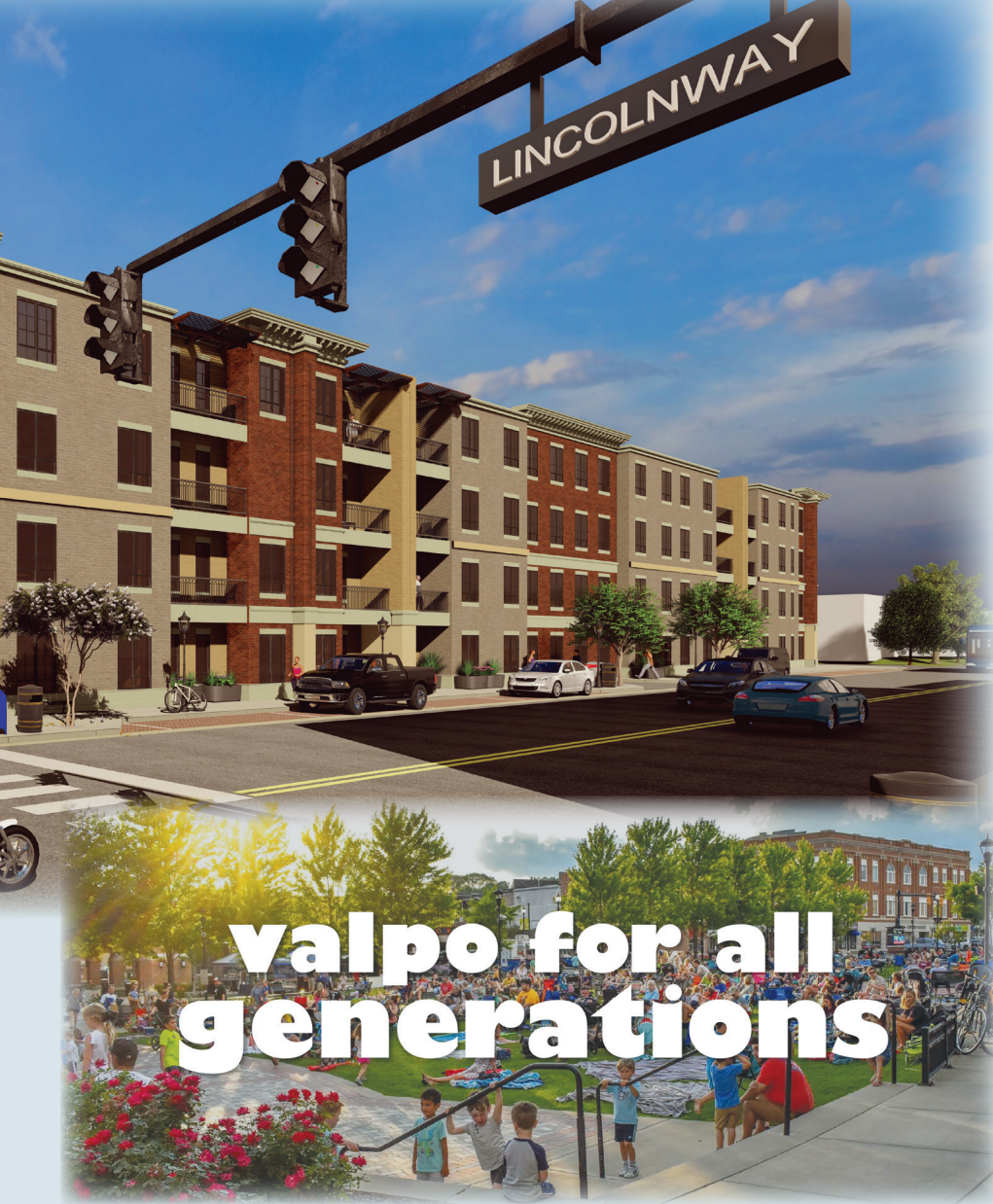
Journeyman's American Factory

Journeyman is transforming an abandoned factory on south Campbell Street into a 140,000 square-foot destination, including a distillery, brewery, restaurant and event spaces. The City recognized the potential of this site and acquired the property in 2017 before Bill Welter of Journeyman Distillery (of Three Oaks, Michigan fame) approached the City with his plan to develop the property in his hometown. Journeyman's American Factory is planning to open fall of 2023, representing an investment of more than \$38 million.

The Journeyman project anchors an area of the city called the Barrel District, which includes Valparaiso's transit services to Chicago. The Barrel District will connect to downtown with a planned lighted pathway.

Grand Gardner Hotel

The Grand Gardner Hotel plans to transform the former Gardner School on Jefferson Street into a 58-room boutique hotel with event space, restaurant and speakeasy. The historic Romanesque building was constructed in 1899 and most recently served as home to the Valparaiso Boys & Girls Club. The project would represent a \$30 million investment by Urschel Development Corporation and is currently in the planning stages.



valpo for all generations

Parks Enhancements

Valpo for All Generations is an initiative introduced in 2022 to advance improvements in Valpo Parks, serving all generations and for generations to come. Projects include:

Flounder & Friends Skatepark at Fairgrounds Park

This next generation skatepark has been designed by Dug Ketterman, renowned skatepark designer and VHS graduate. It will be 16,000-square feet and include a 5.5-foot-deep bowl in the shape of a fish, a 7.5-foot quarter pipe, a mini ramp, stairset with hubbas and rail, a musical manual pad (that plays a song when skated) and more. The project has been community-led from design to fundraising. The \$1.9-million phase I is currently under construction, with plans to open by early winter 2023.

Adult Center for Enrichment (ACE)

The ACE will be a wellness campus for adults, including a facility for gathering, learning, volunteering and more. It will be built on nearly five acres located just north of the Valparaiso YMCA, which was recently gifted to the City by the employees of Urschel Laboratories, Inc. This project is in the planning stages, with work likely to begin in 2024.

Valpo Sports & Recreation Campus

After much community input and planning, the City is sharing plans for phase I of the Valpo Sports & Recreation Campus, Valpo's newest and largest sports park and activity campus. Located on 248 acres between Vale Park Road and 500 North, the park will include multipurpose turf fields (soccer, baseball, football, ultimate frisbee, softball and cross country), an open-air plaza, pickleball courts, and nature trails. This project was jump started with ARPA funds which allowed the City to purchase the land when it was available. In addition, the City will invest \$30 million into the phase I development as well as extend Memorial Parkway, facilitating future public and private development. Construction is expected to begin this summer.

Upgrades to Signature Parks

Throughout the city, Valpo Parks is upgrading facilities, enhancing playgrounds, adding accessibility and improving features, such as the Disc Golf Course at Rogers-Lakewood Park, new playground at Will Park, improved parking at Fairgrounds Park and upgraded siding at Discovery Cottage Preschool.



Take Valpo's Fire History Tour

The Academy of Music Block stood at the corner of Lincolnway and Washington for 62 years – until it was destroyed by fire in 1926. Less than a decade later, fire ravaged the Porter County Courthouse in an event visible from some 10 miles away. And many locals remember the Lowenstine's Department Store fire of 1996. These historic fires have shaped the trajectory of Valparaiso's downtown and they're the subject of a new self-guided Fire History Tour.

"It's important to remember these iconic fires and those who battled them. We remember the lives lost in these fires and the property destroyed. In many ways, these fires changed the way we design, build and interact with our downtown," said Valparaiso Fire Chief Chad Dutz.

The self-guided Fire History Tour includes six locations, all located around the courthouse square. A web-based story map shares historical information and a quiz at the end tests your knowledge. Complete the quiz to claim a challenge coin, available at the Valparaiso Fire Department (Station 1 is located near the tour at 205 Indiana Ave.) and POCO Muse (located at 20 Indiana Ave.)



The Fire History Tour was made possible through a partnership between POCO Muse and the Valparaiso Fire Department and organized by Division Chief Tim Stites. *To find the tour information and quiz, scan the QR code (right).*

City Awards

Neighborhood Grants

The City of Valparaiso awarded 20 new grants in the 2023 Neighborhood Improvement Grant program, providing \$216,175 in funds to support neighborhood unity and community improvements. Coupled with the matching investments by the neighborhoods themselves, this grant cycle will result in more than \$350,000 in positive impact for the community.

"These neighborhood grants truly contribute to Valparaiso's excellent quality of life as they unite neighbors for projects they care about and then fund the work for lasting benefit. Neighborhood Improvement Grants are a positive way the City can support neighborhoods and elevate the community," said Valparaiso Mayor Matt Murphy.

The projects funded this year include tree plantings, pathway enhancements, common area upgrades and beautification projects, among other beneficial plans. The neighborhoods receiving grants in 2023 include Audubon Estates, Banta, Beauty Creek Estates, Bicentennial Square, Bridgewater Estates, Brigata Hills, Central, Courtyards of Pepper Creek, Earthstone, Essex Park, Hawthorne, Hawthorne East, Jessee-Pifer, Keystone Commons, Lakepointe Gardens, Mistwood, Pepper Cove, Shamrock, Sierra, and Villas at Vale Park.



The City of Valparaiso has awarded 20 Neighborhood Improvement Grants for 2023. Since the grant program was introduced in 2018, it has resulted in 99 grants with a positive impact of more than \$1.3 million citywide. Neighborhoods are invited to submit projects that enhance their shared spaces and build community, such as tree plantings, gathering spaces like pavilions and shelters, enhancements to playgrounds and more. To learn who received grants this year and how to apply, visit the community Engagement page at Valpo.us.

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Valparaiso Launches Recycling Education

to Reduce Wishcycling



The City of Valparaiso is working to increase its recycling rate, reducing the amount of waste in local landfills, by launching an education campaign aimed at eliminating *wishcycling*. “Wishcycling is when we drop something that cannot be recycled into the mixed recycling bin hoping or wishing it’s recyclable. Unfortunately, any concentration of these wishcycled items means that your whole bin or even a whole truckload is rejected and diverted to the landfill,” said Steve Poulos, Executive Director of Valparaiso City Services.

Here are some commonly wishcycled items that **should NOT be recycled** and placed in the trash instead:

- Pizza boxes with any visible grease spots or food waste
- Plastic bags – from the grocery or trash bags
Please place recyclables loose in the tote as these bags clog the automated equipment.
- Styrofoam cartons of any kind, including egg cartons
- Plastic silverware and straws
- Ice cream cartons
- Glass or plastic jars with visible food waste in them – be sure to rinse before placing in recycling tote

In addition, the City of Valparaiso reminds the community of ways to maximize the space in their recycling totes by breaking down boxes, crushing plastic bottles and aluminum cans, and stacking paper recycling in paper bags. “At 22 percent, Valpo’s recycling rate is better than the Indiana average, but we’d like to do even better,” said Poulos. To learn more about recycling in the City of Valparaiso, visit tinyurl.com/ValpoRecycles.

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.
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.

