

Stepping it Up Sidewalks and pathways are priority in Valpo

CITY TALK

a City of Valparaiso Quarterly Newsletter

Summer 2011

www.valpo.us

They connect us to schools, to stores and to neighborhoods. Valparaiso has made its sidewalks and pathways a priority, adding and replacing more than six miles this year alone. "Over the past several years we've worked hard to find grants and ways to stretch our sidewalk dollars, doing as much as possible in-house," said Mayor Jon Costas. "These days we're able to do about four times as much sidewalk work as was done in the past," he said.

This year's projects include improvements to downtown sidewalks, radiating from the new Central Park Plaza, as well as a new pedestrian access at the county parking garage. As part of the downtown park project, the city's Redevelopment Commission is funding these walkways. Other sidewalk upgrades include portions between Lincolnway and the

"Thank you! Thank You!
The sidewalks are extra wide and flat and they even have slabs for traction at the curbs. Unless someone walks everywhere, I think it's hard to understand what a huge difference sidewalks make [for a wheelchair user].

—Jocelyn, Valpo resident

Grand Trunk tracks. In all areas, curb ramps are being added, making the city more wheelchair-accessible. School zones have also been targeted for sidewalk improvements, funded entirely by more than \$465,375 in grant funding from the Indiana Department of Transportation. Once complete, this grant

funding will provide more than 11,700 feet of walking routes surrounding Parkview, Memorial and Cooks Corners elementary schools. "Better sidewalks mean more kids can walk to their neighborhood schools and neighborhoods become closer. We're really pleased to find ways to make that happen," said Costas.

more than 10 miles of pathways and will add three more miles this year, including an eight-foot wide pathway on the north side of Lincolnway from Campbell to Napoleon and an eight-foot wide pathway along the west side of Silhavy Road from Pebble Beach to LaPorte Ave.

The Pathways network has grown from two miles in 2003 to 10 miles in 2011. Each new pathway segment becomes a part of the linear Valpo Parks system and is maintained by Valpo Parks. "As a Fit City, we've made these pathways a priority and we see people enjoying these paths at all times of day in all types of weather," said Costas.

YOUR SIDEWALK

With more than 200 miles of sidewalks to maintain, the city must prioritize which sections to replace first, giving first attention to safety concerns and areas with higher pedestrian traffic. However, the city does offer a sidewalk program for residents who wish to have their sidewalk replaced more quickly. Under the program, residents may purchase concrete at the city's rate when choosing a qualified subcontractor to complete the work. Call Public Works at 219.462.4612 for details.

NOW: 200 Miles of sidewalk
2011: +2.5 Miles

NOW: 10 Miles of pathways
2011: +3 Miles

Dear Citizens:

How welcome is summer! After the winter we saw in the Midwest, we deserve a great summer season and this year has lots in store for Valpo.

Visit www.valpo.us for City News, Announcements & Events

We're anxiously awaiting the opening of Central Park Plaza next month. We'll kick off the festivities with a Summer



Rhapsody Music Fest on Aug. 6-7, celebrating American music and Valparaiso ingenuity.

We're busy improving miles of sidewalks

and adding three more miles of pathways – along Lincolnway, down Silhavy. The new walk ways make us more accessible and more connected. We're a Fit City that's becoming more pedestrian friendly each year.

We're also good stewards of the earth, recycling more than any other community in Indiana. Check out the winners of the city's recycling contest in this issue. Their winning designs remind us to reduce, reuse and recycle.

I hope to see you all out enjoying the season. For more updates, visit us online at valpo.us.

All the best,

Jon Costas

Jon Costas
Mayor

Introducing Visual Valpo

New program helps city present its best face

Because those who live and work in Valparaiso take a lot of pride in the city's appearance, the city is unveiling a new program designed to make all of us "city inspectors." Visual Valpo gives each of us three different ways to contact the city to report things that compromise public safety or appearance, such as a fallen sign, a malfunctioning light, a pothole or other issue.

If you spot something amiss, Visual Valpo encourages you to report it in one of three easy ways:

- 1** Call the Visual Valpo line at 548-4850 and leave a message detailing the location and nature of the problem.
- 2** Text your message to 313131. Your initial message must say "visualvalpo" only. Text your issue after receiving the confirmation message.
- 3** Report online at www.valpo.us/requesttracker.aspx or clicking on the "Let us Know" tab on the city's homepage, www.valpo.us.

In all cases, your message will be directed to the proper department for prompt attention. "This is just one more way we can work together as a city to put our best face forward," said Mayor Jon Costas.

A free cell phone app for iPhone is also available (called "Citizen Request Tracker"), which provides a shortcut to online request base.

Use this window cling as a handy reminder of how to report in to Visual Valpo.



3 WAYS TO REPORT IN:

- TEXT 313131 KEYWORD VISUALVALPO
- CALL (219) 548-4850
- WWW.VALPO.US/REQUESTTRACKER.ASPX

Stephanie Hart Chosen for National Charity Calendar

Valparaiso Firefighter Stephanie Hart has been selected to appear in the 2012 National Female Firefighters Calendar, published by America's Female Firefighters, Inc, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to helping burn survivors. Winners are selected based on their appearance of good health and fitness as well as moral character and dedication to fire service. Hart enjoyed volunteering for the photo shoot and also as a counselor at one of the organization's Indiana burn camps. "Though I'm more comfortable in the firehouse than in front of the camera, I was grateful to be a part of the calendar project. This is all about helping burn survivors," said Hart.

And the Winners Are...Winning art decorates recycling trucks

We all win when we recycle, but two young artists were chosen as winners of the city's Recycling Art contest. The winners, Esther Allen of St. Paul's and Elsa Hanson of Northview Elementary, have their recycling designs emblazoned across the sides of the city's two recycling trucks. "Our children are some of the best stewards of the environment and they encourage and inspire us to reduce, reuse and recycle more than we throw away," said Mayor Jon Costas. The city currently diverts about 55 percent of its waste from landfills through recycling. "Though we recycle more than any other community in Indiana, our goal is to do more," said the Mayor. Congratulations to the winning designs.

To get your wheeled, yellow-lidded recycling tote, contact Public Works at 462.4612.

"Our children are some of the best stewards of the environment and they encourage and inspire us to reduce, reuse and recycle more than we throw away,"



Elsa Hanson of Northview Elementary (left) and Esther Allen of St. Paul's show off their winning designs for the city's two recycling trucks.

Downtown EVENTS

Join the FUN!

Central Park Plaza Market

8 am – 3 pm

Tuesdays and Saturdays

June through October

(Courthouse Square until Central Park opens)

Outdoor Movies

Tuesdays at dusk through Aug. 9

Visit valparaisoevents.com for movie titles (Courthouse Square until Central Park opens)

Summer Rhapsody Music Festival

Aug. 6-7

to kick off the opening of Central Park Plaza!

Taste of Downtown

Aug. 20 • Noon – 9 pm

along Lincolnway • Fantastic food, live music and fun for the entire family, including inflatables for the kids

Popcorn Festival

Is Sept. 10!

Visit valparaisoevents.com for more information

The 2012 calendar will be unveiled at the Fire Rescue International show in Atlanta this August with proceeds benefiting burn survivors nationwide. For information about purchasing a calendar and helping burn victims, visit www.americasfemalefirefighters.com or contact Hart at VFDchick@gmail.com.

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CITY
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what's going
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Go to valpo.us
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Going on in Valpo

Register your Rental

To ensure health and safety



The city has adopted a Rental Registration program designed to protect public health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Valparaiso. The program requires all residential rental properties to be registered with the City of Valparaiso. This one-time (NOT annually!) registration is required for each rental property. No additional fees are required unless a complaint is filed against the property in which case a \$50 inspection fee will be charged and an additional \$75 for re-inspection in any cases where a violation is found and must be corrected.

All existing rental units must be registered by Nov. 30, 2011. Registration forms are available at City Hall or at www.valpo.us. Forms are also available by request by e-mail or fax by calling 462.1161.

IF YOU ARE A RENTER

Renters may register complaints about their rental property by calling the Valparaiso Building Department at 462.1161 or by e-mail at valpobuilding@valpo.us.

Tenant information is not collected when rental properties are registered.

For more information, visit www.valpo.us.