



The ANCO development will transform a long-vacant factory into a Valparaiso focal point as the site of a new transit center and commercial district. This project is an illustration of the city's planning efforts, designating the highest and best uses for the city in a way that fosters growth while retaining quality of life.

Valpo is Growing Strong

City benefits from smart planning and strategic growth

An excellent quality of life, superior services, and a positive business climate make Valparaiso a community of choice for residents and businesses alike. To maintain this level of excellence, the City of Valparaiso uses smart growth strategies. "We want to grow deliberately and strategically," said Tyler Kent, Valparaiso's City Planner. To avoid random and unsupportable growth spurts and the accompanying growing pains, the city has developed strategic plans for how and where we want to grow. "Our planning has "resulted in a manageable and sustainable 1 to 2 percent annual growth for the city," he said.

Why grow at all?

"On the simplest level, we're growing

because people want to live and work here," said Mayor Jon Costas. "It's an excellent reflection on our community and our people that others want to join us, yet we don't want to grow so quickly that we lose the qualities that made us desirable in the first place. That's why planning is so important," he said.

There are primarily two ways that the city grows – by expanding outward through annexation, and by expanding from within through infill development.

Annexation – thoughtful and consensual

"While the city isn't actively looking to annex properties, thoughtful annexation makes it possible for us to grow and plan

the development at our borders rather than inheriting conditions that might not be consistent with city zoning and codes," explained Kent. To avoid urban sprawl, the city has a comprehensive annexation plan that defines growth corridors. "Certain areas of our community lend themselves to residential growth, while others are a better fit for retail, commercial, or industrial growth," said Kent.

The first criterion for annexation is that the property must be at least 1/8 or 12.5 percent contiguous (connected) to existing city boundaries, based on state code. Secondly, the annexation must make sense from a service standpoint. "We ask,

continued on page 3

Dear Neighbors,

Wow, we sure hope that groundhog was right, and we can look forward to an early spring. I'm as eager as our schoolkids for warmer temps and longer days. Yet, this issue of City Talk looks at something far more reliable than a groundhog: Planning. When I became mayor in 2004, I began by creating a comprehensive strategic plan with a vision and goals. I'm pleased to say that we've accomplished so many of our goals and created guidelines for future planning with the city's vision in mind.

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This issue outlines the role of planning in the city's growth. We find ourselves in the enviable position of being a community of choice – a place where people want to live, work, shop, eat, and play. Rather than get

caught up in the excitement and watch growth happen, we work together to plan our growth. Thoughtful growth ensures that each addition improves our community and that we're able to continue providing a high level of service to all.

We're also sharing a refresher on roundabouts as we prepare to complete our 7th roundabout this year, improving traffic flow and safety throughout the city. We've introduced a new Neighborhood Toolkit to encourage neighborhoods to engage with each other and with the city. And we're patting some Public Works crew members on the back. We have an excellent team here in the city and we're happy to highlight them.

We thank each of you for your role in the community's success. Valparaiso continues to have big plans!

Sincerely,

Jon Costas

Jon Costas, Mayor

Silhavy/LaPorte Roundabout Ahead



The city's newest roundabout is about to transform the Silhavy/LaPorte intersection into an efficient roundabout. This roundabout rivals the traffic volume of the 5-points roundabout, moving about 35,000 vehicles per day. The Silhavy/LaPorte roundabout will also be a two-lane roundabout, with four legs, allowing for efficient flow in all directions.

The roundabout will be completed in phases throughout 2019, maintaining at least one lane of traffic in each direction for all but a few days of the construction process.

A Roundabout Refresher

"Remember that driving a roundabout is a slow dance; not a break dance," says Mayor Jon Costas. Here are some reminders to keep us all moving safely and efficiently:

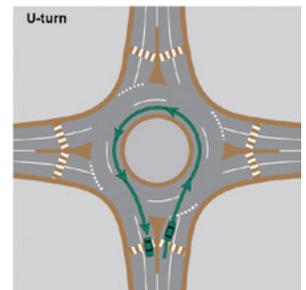
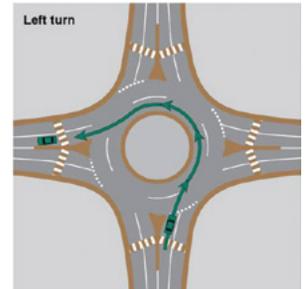
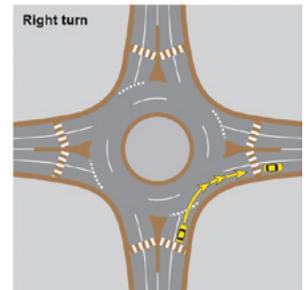
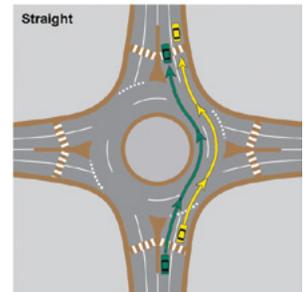
- In a roundabout, all traffic flows in a single, counterclockwise direction.
- Drivers entering the roundabout yield to traffic already circulating in the roundabout. As you approach the roundabout, be prepared to stop and wait for a gap in the circulating traffic.
- To enter the roundabout, turn right – into the circle.
- Once inside the roundabout, continue moving until you reach your exit. Do not stop while inside the roundabout -- continue to flow with the traffic.
- Before exiting the roundabout, use your right turn signal to inform others of your exit from the roundabout.
- ALWAYS yield to pedestrians.

How to Drive in a Two-Lane Roundabout:

In a multi-lane roundabout, such as the one at the Calumet/Roosevelt/Vale Park intersection and the upcoming Silhavy/LaPorte intersection, you choose a lane before entering the roundabout. Choose your lane as you do for a traditional multi-lane intersection:

- To go straight or right, get in the right lane
- To go straight or left, get in the left lane.
- Drivers may also make U-turns from the left lane.

For a helpful video of how to drive a roundabout, customized for Valparaiso, visit Valpo.us and search "how to drive a roundabout."



Valpo is Growing Strong

continued from page 1

'Can the city serve the new residents without compromise?' We must determine if we can provide water and sewer, upgrade or maintain the roads, plow and salt the streets, etc.," explained Kent.

"Without annexation, we would likely still see development at our borders – only city standards would not apply. In addition, residents outside our city borders do impact city benefits and services but don't always pay a proportionate share of the city's costs. By using smart annexation, we can ensure that those who benefit from city services also contribute to them," said Economic Development Director Patrick Lyp.

Since 2004, the city has grown through annexation by more than 2,500 acres, including residential and commercial/industrial additions. All of these annexations have been voluntary – property owners have agreed to the annexations as desirable, gaining city utilities and services while contributing property taxes.

One of the more recent annexations was the addition of property along State Road 49 (a defined growth corridor), providing space for the Lakes of Valparaiso, an upscale apartment community of 408 units. "We've been very successful and have an occupancy rate of 95 percent already," said Angela Fielder, VP of Operations for Weiss Entities, Developer of the Lakes of Valparaiso.

Planning has been instrumental in the success of Valparaiso's businesses. By planning certain areas as business/commercial, areas as retail, and areas as residential, each can thrive, according to Lyp. "While some have pushed for more retail over the years, the city's caution has worked to our benefit. Adding too many retail spaces would have resulted in many more rectangular box stores. Yet, we see neighboring cities struggle with vacancies in these areas. The fact that we don't is not luck, but planning. We want the jobs here, rather

than somewhere else, but we also want our growth to be sustainable," he said.

Infill Development

Another way the city grows is through infill development – developing land already within the city or redeveloping existing properties to better uses. Some very visible examples are the future Anco development which will transform a long-vacant factory into a new Valparaiso focal point as a transit center and commercial district; and the St. Paul Square development which transforms an underused and obsolete school building into a 48-unit residential development. "It's very desirable for a city to redevelop spaces to a higher and better use, particularly where we already have services in place," said Kent.

Economic Development

Maintaining and expanding areas for business to thrive is another part of the city's growth plan. "Several years ago, the city identified the need for additional land for business development. Eastport Business Center and Montdale Industrial Park have served the city well for many years, but both are close to being filled. In working with the Lakes of Valparaiso, the city was able to ensure 90+ acres of land was dedicated towards a business park and an 80,000 square foot building was constructed to attract new businesses to our community," said Lyp. "All of these businesses provide jobs and help support the community."

The city also works with existing companies to promote success and growth. "Historically, 70 to 80 percent of a community's new business investments and job growth can be attributed to existing local businesses," said Lyp. For example, long-time Valparaiso business CSI recently began an expansion of their facility on Calumet Ave. Similarly, Lake Cable has announced plans for a \$7 million expansion that will add 54 new employees to the 109 who currently work in the city. In both cases, other communities were very interested in luring these businesses away, but the city worked with both to ensure their decision was to remain and grow in Valparaiso.

Retaining our Values

Planning for the future with positive growth strategies has paid off for Valparaiso. Building projects continue to grow, with more than \$102 million in new construction dollars invested in 2018 alone, representing 108 new single-family homes, 95 multi-family projects, and 10 new businesses. The city's overall assessed value (AV) also shows positive growth for the city as AV has steadily increased from \$1.68 billion in 2016 to \$1.86 billion today. "Just as important as enhanced property values, Valparaiso retains its community values. We continue to value quality of life over quantity of miles and committed to remaining an inclusive city where people want to live, work, and play," said Costas.

Residential Planning

Market Analysis to Inform Housing Decisions

Any meaningful growth plan must include a residential component – a clear picture of the community's housing stock, availabilities, and future needs. To gain a clear and objective picture, the city is currently considering proposals from qualified firms nationwide to conduct a Residential Market Analysis. The selected firm will provide a complete inventory of present housing stock and a forecast of future needs.

"We don't rely on anecdotal data or loose predictions to make planning decisions," said City Planner Tyler Kent. "A comprehensive residential study will provide meaningful data to forecast future needs and demands," he said. The study will project needs over 5, 10, and 15-year increments using trends, census numbers, building permit data, and more. The report will look at existing housing stock, including rented vs. owned, property types, values, ages, and vacancy rates. The study will include analysis of affordable housing, student/faculty housing, and senior/assisted living, comparisons of availability and affordability vs other regions and communities, anticipated employment trends, and commuting patterns. "As a city, we must identify and address shortcomings in livability, marketability, and overall quality of life. This study will help us determine if we need to make changes to our Unified Development Ordinance to reflect housing needs," said Kent.

The Request for Proposal was publicized early this year with proposals due in April. A selection will be made in May with the report due by the end of 2019.

*****ECRWSS

**LOCAL
POSTAL CUSTOMER**



Chris Bodie and Ed Polletta found a resident's wedding ring in a pile of leaves, reuniting a grateful couple with the ring.

Public Works Goes Beyond

Late last year, two Public Works employees had a “needle in a haystack” moment that resulted in reuniting a resident with a lost and cherished wedding ring. Ed Polletta and Chris Bodie were out vacuuming late-fallen leaves when Polletta spotted something gold on the ground – seconds before consuming the pile with the leaf vac. “It looked like a keychain ring. I picked it up and it was heavy. I realized it was a ring,” he said. He brushed it off and approached the home. It turned out it was the husband’s wedding ring.

The surprised and very grateful residents had searched long and hard for the ring, yet assumed it was never to be seen again. Ed Polletta was also instrumental in rescuing two women in 2013. In the first incident, he alerted authorities after noticing multiple newspapers on a resident’s porch, prompting a rescue for the resident who had fallen inside the day before. Next, he spotted a woman on her porch after she had fallen and broken her hip. Both women recovered.

Neighborhood Notes

Get the Neighborhood Toolkit!

The City of Valparaiso has created a Neighborhood Toolkit as a handy resource for neighborhood groups looking to organize, host events, partner with the city on projects, and more. Created by the office of Community Engagement, the Toolkit includes:

- Ideas for how to inspire neighborhoods
- Ways for neighbors to be healthier, more environmentally friendly, and more engaged
- Information about city services that support neighborhoods including the neighborhood grant program
- A growing directory of neighborhoods



To get your free digital Neighborhood Toolkit, visit Valpo.us and search “Neighborhood Toolkit.” To learn more, contact Maggie Clifton, Director of Community Engagement at City Hall, 219-462-1161.

Rental Registration

All residential rental units must be registered with the city, and whenever ownership of a registered rental property changes, the new owner must submit change of ownership form within 30 days of sale. The registration application is available at Valpo.us and registration is just \$5.



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Neighborhood Notes

To be a good neighbor, remember to observe ordinances that affect others, such as not parking over sidewalks or pathways.