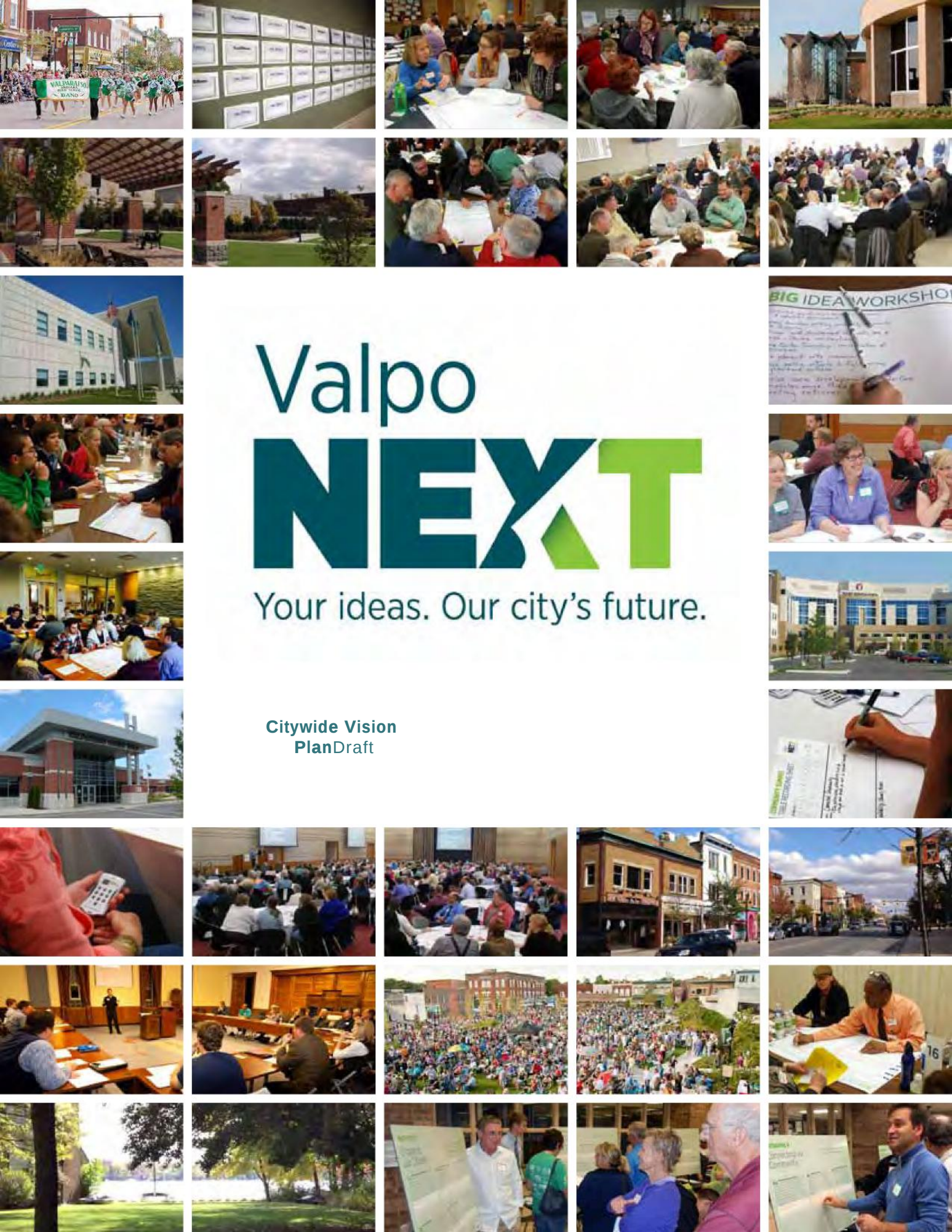




Valpo NEXT

Your ideas. Our city's future.

Citywide Vision
PlanDraft

Blank back cover

insert council resolution here

City of Valparaiso
Tyler Kent
166 Lincolnway
Valparaiso, Indiana
46383 219-464-1161

On behalf of the ValpoNEXT Steering Committee, we want to thank the hundreds of citizens of Valparaiso who, through their time, ideas, and participation in ValpoNEXT, have come together to make our community even better in the future.

We understood that our charge to generate ideas for the future would be challenging, as Valparaiso is already a nationally noted community with a legacy of thoughtful planning and a great deal of positive momentum. We were concerned that some might be satisfied, and that satisfaction might bring complacency. However, through a careful process of public dialogue and discernment, with expert guidance from planningNext, Valparaiso

citizens identified many important issues and needs, which led us to concrete and identifiable opportunities for our future.

Throughout the 16 month process, the citizens of Valparaiso were asked to contribute thousands of hours of their time in a myriad of ways. We started with a city staff and consultant group seeking to understand the issues

and provide a representative sample of input. Then, we united a volunteer steering committee of local business and community leaders of various ages and backgrounds. Next, we compiled a fantastically cooperative and driven facilitator group for the community outreach and data gathering. All of these contributors would help bring to the table, and to an online discussion group, hundreds of citizen participants at various locations around our city.

Overall, the processes of organization and leadership, understanding and discovery, compilation and reporting, led to this, our final vision document which shall serve as a blueprint for improvement for our beloved city.

After all, together we've gone from good to great. Now let's go from great to even better in our hometown "Vale of Paradise," Valparaiso, Indiana.

Truly Appreciative,

Matt Evans
Co-Chair

Elizabeth Lynn
Co-Chair

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

MAYOR OF VALPARAISO

Jon Costas

CITY COUNCIL

Michael
Baird John
Bowker Deb
Butterfield
Tim Daly
Jan Dick
Joey Larr
Bob Tayler

CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Bill Oeding

CITY CLERK-TREASURE

Sharon Swihart

CITY STAFF

Tyler Kent, Planning
Director

COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST

Kim Ranegar

CONSULTANTS

Planning NEXT
Development
Economics

STEERING COMMITTEE

Matt Evans, Co-Chair
* Elizabeth Lynn, Co-
Chair * Tomas Angon

Bruce Berner
Deb
Butterfield
Brad
Cavanaugh
Robert
Coolman Elias
Crim*

Ellen
Demartinis
Christa
Emerson Joe
Frake

Marisa Garcia-
Verdugo * Charley
Gillispie

Sofia
Grimsgard
Jon Groth *
Rich Herr

Bob
Macmahan
Cory Muro
John Novak
Ken Pylipow
Alex
Rastovski
Lois Reiner

Rocco
Schiralli Jon
Schmaltz
Rich Schmidt *
Caroline
Shook Holly
Singh
Martin Sonnenberg

Tina St. Aubin
Robert
Thompson

Garner Tullis
* Bob

Wanek *
Brian
Williams

Beth Wrobel
Barb Young

* Also served as facilitators

VALPONEXT FACILITATORS

Deb Albers
John Albers
Elizabeth
Allen
Tina
Allen
Barbara Ball
Eric Besc
hinski
Pam
Carpente
r Heath
Carter
Carol
Costakis
Barb Crumpacker-
Niedner Darlene
Cohn
Robert Cotton
Heather Curlee
Novak
Stephanie
Danyi Alison
DeVries
Kathleen L
DeWitt
Jan Dick

Steve Ingram Lauri
Kris Parker Samuel P
Andrea Proulx Buini
Paul Sciarra Joel St
Hillary Swardson Me
Ed Uehling
Kathleen Van Arsd
Liz Wuerffel

SPECIAL THANKS TO

AmeriCorps Members from United Way of Porter
County Grace New Testament Church
Human Relations Council
Mayor's Advisory Council on Disability
Porter Starke
Thomas Jefferson Middle School
Tomato Bar
Valparaiso High School
Valparaiso University
Valparaiso Family YMCA

Marian Dick
Kaye
Frataccia
Janet
French
Kathy
Glade
Kathy Groth
Christine Harsh

ValpoNEXT would like to give a special shout out to Cory Muro, owner of the Tomato Bar, who generously supplied pizza for the committee meetings throughout the process which kept the committee happy and well nourished!

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	8
THE ACTION AGENDA	28
Initiative 1: Engaging our Citizens	
Initiative 2: Nurturing our Young	
People Initiative 3: Embracing our Diversity	
Initiative 4: Connecting our Community Initiative 5: Protecting our Natural Resources	
Initiative 6: Fostering our Economic Competitiveness	
Initiative 7: Expanding our Cultural and Recreational Offerings	
Initiative 8: Strengthening our Sense of Place	
Initiative 9: Sustaining our Local Government	
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	48
<i>Under separate cover</i>	
APPENDIX A: SNAPSHOT REPORT	
APPENDIX B: PUBLIC INPUT	
DATABASES	
<i>economic reports (Under separate cover)</i>	
BASELINE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS	
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES ASSESSMENT	
HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES	
STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS	

EXECUTIVE





Introduction	10
Motivation	
Organization	
Key Findings	
Visioning Plan Process	16
Collaboration	22

SUMMARY

WHAT'S NEXT FOR VALPO?

ValpoNEXT was a community-driven process to prepare a long-term vision plan for the City of Valparaiso that encompasses many aspects of community life. The once-in-a-generation opportunity gave the citizens of Valparaiso the opportunity to think creatively, act boldly, and ensure that Valpo remains a leading place to live, work and play. The city charged the planning team, Steering Committee and members of the community to think BIG about Valpo's future. This Vision Plan is a long-range visioning document looking out 20-30 years to answer the question, "what's next for Valpo?"

MOTIVATION FOR THE VISION PLAN

Valparaiso has a long legacy of thoughtful planning and tradition of commitment to following through on those plans. The community has earned a well-deserved reputation as a vibrant and prosperous place. The ValpoNEXT visioning process provided the opportunity to build on that success and make Valpo even better.

ORGANIZATION OF THE VISION PLAN

The Vision Plan is structured in two parts: an overarching vision statement and an action agenda. The vision statement captures the aspiration for the future of the Valparaiso community and directs the action agenda

as a whole. The action agenda contains 43 actions--defined as policies, programs or projects--that serve as the specific recommendations of the Plan. These 43 actions are organized into nine initiative areas. Each initiative area also has a

corresponding value statement that intends to capture the key beliefs the community holds about the topic.

VISION

The following statement captures the vision for the future of the Valparaíso community and frames the action

Valparaíso aspires to be... the most civically engaged city of its size.

The Valparaíso community will be a place where people take care of one another and are highly involved in local community organizations and efforts. Active and progressive, with a strong sense of place and environmental ethic, it will honor authenticity and uniqueness in culture and business initiatives and seek the wellbeing of its people.

Nine initiative areas organize 43 actions—projects, programs or policies—that will advance the community. Each Initiative includes a value statement that captures the key beliefs the

ACTION AGENDA

1.

Engaging our

Citizens... through meaningful

opportunities to lead and serve in the community, understand public institutions and participate actively in local governance.

Nurturing our Young People...

with excellent schools and teachers and expanded youth development

2.

initiatives.

4. Connecting our Community...

Embracing our Diversity... as a truly welcoming city with a variety of transportation options for moving within and to and from our city, affordable housing, high quality health care, excellent education and living wages.

Protecting our Natural

Resources... with

measures to increase green space, clean energy, good water quality, recycling, and fossil fuel alternatives.

5.

Fostering our Economic Competitiveness...

through a diversified local economy which nurtures existing

6.

businesses and incubates new ones, offering residents a wide range of ways to

advance their financial standing.

Recreational Offerings...

- 7. Expanding our Cultural and**
with programs,
partnerships and settings
that draw people together,
encourage creativity and
enhance well-being.

Strengthening our Sense of Place... with identifiable neighborhoods that are safe,

- 8.** walkable, connected, and
offer a range of housing
choices.

Sustaining our Local Government... through

- 9.** measures to ensure
strong fiscal health
and responsibility, in
order to continue to
provide high quality
infrastructure and services
to the community.

PEOPLE

The population is growing at twice the rate of the state, four times the rate of the Chicago MSA.

The 2010 Census recorded 31,730 residents in Valparaiso, which is a 16 percent increase from 2000. In

comparison, Porter County grew by 12 percent between 2000-2010, while the Chicago MSA grew four percent and the State of Indiana grew by seven percent.



change in population, 2000-2010

16%	12%	4%	7%
+4,302	+17,545	+362,789	+403,317
Valparaiso	Porter County	Chicago MSA	Indiana



Vu's students make up a significant proportion of the city's population.

Valparaiso University (VU) is home to approximately 3,000 undergraduate students and 1,000 law and graduate students. Generally, students are counted by the Census in the place they live for most

of the year and so are usually included in the population of the community where they



attend school (even though their permanent address may be elsewhere). If all of VU's students were counted as city residents, they would make up approximately 13 percent of the city's population.



A younger population, aging more slowly.

Valparaiso's population is somewhat younger compared to Indiana overall. In 2010, the median age in Valparaiso was 33.4 years versus 37.0 for Indiana. Between the year 2000 and 2010, Valparaiso's median age increased by less than one year, while the median age in Indiana



increased by nearly three years.

Large proportion of single person households.

There is a relatively higher proportion of people living alone in Valparaiso. Approximately 35 percent of Valparaiso households (in 2010) are single-person households , compared to 23 percent in the county and 27 percent in the state.

The city is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse.

Valparaiso's population is predominantly Caucasian (white), but there has been a notable increase in diversity since the year 2000. In that year, people who identified themselves as African American or Asian each made up 1.5 percent of the population. In 2010, these groups made up four percent and three percent of the population respectively. Similarly, Hispanics (of any race) made up about eight percent of the population in 2010,

Mayor's Strategic Plan

Specific action plan for the city to implement over a five-year

Unified Development Ordinance

Major revision to the city's zoning code, subdivision, and other development regulations

Stormwater Master Plan

Capital improvements plan to manage stormwater and sewer overflows (in response to flooding in

Parks and Open Space Master Plan / Pathways and Greenways Master Plan

Recommends improvements to the city's parks, open

Elderstyle Strategic Plan

Provides a framework for coordination of service delivery for

Downtown Parking Study

Recommends a range of short- and medium-term solutions to improve

PLAC

A legacy of planning.

Valparaiso has a legacy of planning for the future and of following through on those plans. The city was the first community in Indiana to adopt a comprehensive plan (1925 Master Plan), which has been maintained and periodically updated, most recently in 2013. This page shows major plans and policy documents between 2009 and the creation of

ADA Transition Plan

Prioritizes improvements to city infrastructure compatible with the

Comprehensive Plan Update

Long-term city-wide vision and policy guide, primarily dealing with physical growth and land development

U.S. 30 Corridor Master Plan

Long-term vision and plan for the U.S. 30

SR 49 Corridor Plan

Long-term vision and

Airport Zone Master Plan

Long-term plan for the Airport

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014



neighborhoods, both new and old.

Diversity in housing types, ages, and types of neighborhoods.

Unlike many suburban communities surrounding Chicago that have developed large expanses of homogenous tract housing, Valparaiso has a relatively diverse housing stock that developed gradually over the city's history. The community's neighborhoods differ in the era in which they were developed, architectural character, and density. However, this diversity means that the housing stock is somewhat older. Approximately 88 percent of homes are over 20 years old, which means they tend to have higher maintenance costs compared to newer homes. Also, rental housing in Valparaiso is generally older than owner-occupied housing.

Relatively large amount of rental housing.

Typical of towns with significant university communities, there is a large proportion of rental housing in Valparaiso. Approximately 45 percent of housing in Valparaiso is renter-occupied (30% in Indiana, 35% nationwide). In similar communities, the proportion of renter-

A distinctive and memorable place.

While communities in Indiana and the Chicago area have struggled to maintain their traditional downtowns and older neighborhoods in the face of suburban development, Valparaiso has managed to create a vibrant downtown and maintain a variety of distinctive



49e

extensive programming for all ages.

The city has undertaken balanced transportation improvements (road network and alternatives modes) with an emphasis on street character.

The city is actively implementing its thoroughfare plan with street and intersection improvements to improve capacity and safety. Sidewalks are present along most streets and connect residential areas. The bikeway system includes lanes within street right-of-way and off-street paths through natural areas. The city's local bus, the "V-line," includes five routes and links Valparaiso University with Downtown, employment and shopping areas and residential areas.

An enviable parks system.

Like its pedestrian and bike trails system, Valparaiso is known for a strong parks system. The city has 539 acres of developed parks on 18 sites. In addition to the existing park space, there are 144 acres of undeveloped land owned by

the parks system that could become future parkland.

Further, the city offers

PROSPERITY

The city has much of which to be proud.

During their first meeting the ValpoNEXT steering committee was asked to share their thoughts about Valparaiso and what they were most proud of (i.e. community accomplishments, assets or other sources

of pride). Their responses covered the following themes:

1. **Parks.** Valparaiso's park system is generally outstanding. Valparaiso's Central Park Plaza.

2. **Downtown.** Improvements to the downtown area offer more dining, entertainment and community events.

3. **Philanthropy.** Valparaiso has a strong non-profit and philanthropic community, including churches. The city has a strong volunteer culture and is considered a very "giving" community.

4. **Education.** Valparaiso has a very good k-12 school system with a high school.

5. **Healthcare.** Porter County Medical Center, St. Mary Medical Center and other healthcare facilities have recently expanded.

6. **Government Services.** The city has strong leadership, maintains good services and has done well at managing growth.

7. **Businesses/Jobs.** The community has an award-winning chamber of commerce, growing businesses and job opportunities, and a good mix of local independent businesses and national companies.

8. **Institutions.** Valparaiso is home to a variety of quality institutions that enhance the city's quality of life including YMCA, Porter County Museum, Memorial Opera House, Valparaiso University, and the Taltree Arboretum.



The city's share of the county's (and region's) total employment is increasing.

valparaiso's share of porter county's total jobs 2002-2007

35.7% 2002 38.4% 2007



Several organizations promote economic development in Valparaiso, but there is no common, overall vision or strategic plan uniting their efforts.

Valparaiso-area economic development efforts are carried out by at least six agencies and organizations in Valparaiso, Porter County, and the Northwest Indiana region. While these organizations have many



impressive efforts and accomplishments, there is no strategic plan that establishes accountability for funding and investment at the local level.

High rate of educational attainment.

Approximately 34 percent of Valparaiso residents over the age of 25 have a bachelor's degree or higher. That level of educational attainment is above the

national average (28%) and much higher than Porter County (26%) and Indiana (23%) overall.

High performing school system.

Valparaiso Community Schools are highly regarded. Achievement at the district's elementary and middle

schools consistently meets and often exceeds state standards. Valparaiso High School's latest report card shows that it exceeds state averages and is continuing to improve.

THE PROCESS

The ValpoNEXT process was inclusive and transparent and driven by the community's insight and aspirations. There were multiple face-to-face public workshops

as well as online activities throughout the year-long process. The planning team, along with citizen Steering

Committee, worked tirelessly to ensure all members of the community knew they had a choice to participate in the process.



in an effort to be truly inclusive, the





880+
People

2090
Pieces of

43
actions



BIG IDEA WORKSHOPS

FEBRUARY 24, 25, 26, 2014

The Big Idea Workshops were the official public kickoff for the ValpoNEXT planning process and gathered input from the community through both individual work and small group brainstorming.

The Big Idea Workshops took place across three evenings in late February at different locations and at different times of the day in order to make the meetings as convenient as possible. The Workshops had three distinct parts:

- 1. Setting the Stage:** Participants were given a brief introduction to the ValpoNEXT planning process and project timeline. Participants were also asked to share what they would want the news headlines for Valparaiso to be in 20-30 years.
- 2. Small Group Work:** Participants worked in small groups with a trained facilitator to identify major issues within the community, and then each participant voted with sticker dots for their top three issues. The table facilitator tallied up the dots and then the group worked together to brainstorm big ideas in response to the top 5 issues identified.
- 3. Reporting out:** At the end of the meeting, a handful of groups shared their top issues and big ideas generated during the small group work.



in an effort to be truly inclusive, the first Big Idea Workshop had a small group facilitated in Spanish – a first for the city of Valparaiso!



MAJOR OUTCOMES

1. Over 300 people attended the workshops
2. Roughly 560 issues were identified
3. Roughly 900 ideas were generated
4. Workshops had an impressively high satisfaction rate
 - 100% of people felt comfortable working in their group
 - 99% felt their ideas were recorded accurately
 - 94% felt the meeting was the right length
 - 98% wanted to continue to participate in the process

Key Topics

Transportation
Place
Economic Development
Parks and Recreation
Education
City Services / Infrastructure
Implementation
Housing
Social Services
Health and
Wellness



SMALL GROUP

MARCH AND APRIL,

The purpose of the small group meetings was to engage specific demographics within the community that were under-represented at the Big Idea Workshops.

The analysis of the exit questionnaires from each of the Big Idea Workshops revealed that two different but related populations were missing: young adults ages 18-34 and those with lower incomes and lower educational attainment. In order to gather input from those missing demographics, small group meetings were organized and

The small group meetings were similar in format to the Big Idea Workshops in that participants worked together to identify issues within the community and then generate big ideas to address the

MAJOR

5. Over 100 people participated in the small group
6. Six meetings were held with Valparaíso High School students, Valparaíso University students, Tomato Bar employees, Porter Starke employees, Mayor's Advisory Council on Disabilities, and
7. An additional 164 issues were identified
8. An additional 320 ideas were generated

ONLINE ACTIVITIES & DISCUSSION FORUM

The ValpoNEXT Online Discussion Forum, project website, and Facebook account were utilized throughout the process as an additional method of gathering public input. For those who weren't able to make it the face-to-face events, the web-based tools allowed for people to share their issues, ideas and feedback at all critical steps in the process. An online version of each of the public events--Big Idea Workshops, Community Summit and The Launch--was available for utilized surveys, open ended questions and



The ValpoNEXT
facebook page
attracted over 3,020
followers
throughout the process.



COMMUNITY

MAY 28,

The Community Summit was designed to share existing conditions affecting Valparaiso as a basis for evaluating previously collected input and understanding preferences for transformational ideas. The Community Summit gathered feedback on specific initiatives derived from the big ideas gathered at the Big Idea Workshop.

The Community Summit began with a brief presentation of existing conditions and trends related to the overall topics of people, place and prosperity. Following the presentation for each topic there was a round of key-pad polling which tested value statements and specific initiatives related to that topic. The use of an audience response system allowed for real time result tabulation and sharing so everyone in the room could see which options were the strongest among the participants.

MAJOR OUTCOMES

4. Over 200 people attended the Community Summit.
5. Nine community value statements were tested and received high validation (on average 74% of people indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed with the statements).
6. Thirteen specific questions were asked which tested strategies and specific actions related to issues such as housing, sustainability, diversity, economic development, transportation and





THE
SEPTEMBER 24,

The purpose of The Launch was to reveal the draft Vision Plan. The Launch was both a celebratory and momentum building event to begin the plan's implementation.

The format for the Launch event was an open house with display boards and a brief presentation to orient participants and share status of the project. Participants viewed the plan, talked with the ValpoNEXT team, voted on their top priority actions, shared comments and feedback on the actions and indicated how they wanted to get involved in the plan's implementation. The Steering Committee Members served as station agents for each of the initiative areas and fielded questions, assisted participants with the voting and commenting activities and encouraged people to get involved with implementation.

MAJOR OUTCOMES

4. Over 100 people attended The Launch event.
5. There were 110 comments were collected.
6. Roughly half of the participants filled out an "I want to get involved" card where they indicated which specific actions they were interested in helping with to assist in implementing the Vision Plan. In total 36 of the 44 actions were identified by people as ones they wanted to get directly involved in

THE VISION PLAN ROADSHOW

September 25 - October 12, 2014

The purpose of the roadshow was to extend the review and voting period for the draft vision plan from the one night event of The Launch so that more people could participate. The roadshow allowed for the vision plan to be out and about in the community for an additional 11 days. The Vision Plan Roadshow took advantage of three diverse and heavily trafficked community locations (City Hall, YMCA and Valparaiso University) where people could easily engage with the boards to vote on priority actions and share their comments. The

Roughly 100 people directly engaged with the boards by voting for their top priority actions and many more were exposed to the boards coming and going from the locations because of the high visibility of the placement of the boards.

COLLABORATION

The steering committee worked to synthesize thousands of pieces of input to prepare a recommended vision for the Valparaíso community. It should be recognized that many participants in the process believe “this is a moment” for the community, especially as it relates to the relationship of the city and Valparaíso University. Furthermore, this process—ValpoNEXT—is widely recognized as being proactive and positive.

for engaging the public in meaningful dialogue about ValpoNEXT has set a new standard issues facing the community and has been referenced numerous times as the new benchmark for how to inclusively and thoughtfully confront tough matters facing the community.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The city appointed a diverse 40-member citizen steering committee to guide ValpoNEXT. This committee, which represented the diversity of Valparaíso, was a working group that served as advocates for ValpoNEXT and helped to make recommendations about the process and substance of the vision. The group met nine times over the 12 month planning process, conducted outreach and publicity, participated in the public meetings and events and provided feedback at every step in the process.

FACILITATORS

Through an open call on social media and recommendations from steering committee members, a group of facilitators were assembled to help throughout the process. This group received workshop-specific training prior to the Big Idea Workshop and then served as table facilitators for the workshops. They were also called upon to serve as table leaders at the Community Summit and helped to

facilitate the small group meetings that were held as a follow up to the Big Idea Workshops. This group was instrumental in achieving the high satisfaction rates at the Big Idea Workshop and in the quality feedback and input received.



WHO'S WHO IN Valpo NEXT

Public

INPUT AND FEEDBACK

Widespread public involvement was vital to ValpoNEXT's success. Various in-person workshops

and online tools offered more ways for citizens to give input throughout the entire process.

City Staff

PROJECT LEADERSHIP

City staff supported and helped to coordinate the work of all other groups with local knowledge and expertise.

Elected Officials

MONITOR

Mayor and Council monitored the Valpo Next process and the resulting community vision, recognizing that success should be independent of the city's elected leadership.

Consultants

PROCESS LEADERSHIP, EXPERTISE

Planning NEXT facilitated the process and shared experience from other successful communities. Randall Gross of Development Economics provided economic expertise.