



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION TO THE CITY OF VALPARAISO
ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
PARKS DEPARTMENT
PLANNING DEPARTMENT
CITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
BUILDING DEPARTMENT

REQUESTED BY THE
CITY OF VALPARAISO ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD
MARCH 7, 2025

FINAL RFI RESPONSE BY THE CITY - APRIL 29, 2025

City of Valparaiso Environmental Sustainability Policies and Practices

Introduction

The City of Valparaiso, Indiana is known in the upper Midwest as being a proactive leader among its peer cities when addressing environmental responsibilities for many decades. Most recently, Valparaiso's Common Council established the Valparaiso Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) through Ordinance No. 26, 2024 which was enacted on October 28, 2024. The new seven (7) member Board was created in order to provide non-binding guidance, recommendations and/or goals on environmental sustainability policies and practices to all of the City's various Departments, staff, boards, commissions and to community members/or organizations. The EAB is further tasked to provide assistance to the City's staff in the development and completion of a mandated Annual Report. This report is to chronicle the City's annual environmental sustainability activities and is to be presented to the City's Common Council in December of each year.

The EAB will be meeting on a monthly basis to discuss, among other issues, the City's ongoing projects and associated sustainability efforts as they relate to environmental matters. The first official monthly meeting of the EAB was held on February 3, 2025. The EAB's subsequent monthly meetings will be designed to conduct a public forum for the consideration of ideas on improving the City's existing sustainability practices, management of natural resources and community relationships for the City to deliver a better quality of life for the benefit of current and future generations.

Purpose

As a beginning step in fulfilling the EAB's responsibilities, a request was made by the EAB to specific Departments within the City of Valparaiso for information on present-day environmental sustainability policies and practices. The purpose of this inquiry is to provide the EAB with a thorough understanding of the City's sustainability measures currently in place. The EAB's request for information was made to the City's Engineering, Planning, Parks and Recreation, City Services (Public Works and Utilities) and Building Departments via an emailed correspondence/questionnaire dated March 7, 2025.

In response to the EAB's questionnaire, the noted Departments have completed answers to each of the Board's questions. The answers from the individual City Departments to those submitted questions are presented herein with the appropriate appendices.

Engineering Department Max Rehlander – Engineering Director

General

1. What are the existing sustainability policies or practices utilized by your department?

This is a broad question that can be answered in many ways. In brief, the Engineering Department has two (2) main divisions of responsibility. Those areas are for regulatory compliance and capital improvements.

For regulatory compliance, the Engineering Department reviews private and public projects to ensure proposed development is in accordance with the City's requirements under the City's Specifications and Standards for Acceptance of Municipal Improvements, the City's Stormwater Technical Standards Manual and the City's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). These documents and ordinances have been adopted to ensure infrastructure is built to minimum regulatory standards that will provide for long lasting success. This includes environmental requirements.

The capital improvements component provides project recommendations to the Board of Public Works and the Utilities Board. These plans improve local roadways, stormwater sewer, sanitary sewer and water distribution infrastructure. Maintaining the City's aging infrastructure and finding cost effective strategies for these work types are key goals.

2. Are there policies or practices that your department could easily integrate that would improve sustainability and environmental outcomes?

At this time, the Engineering Department recommends environmental improvements based on past performance, industry/technical knowledge and by monitoring the work of project contractors on a day-to-day basis. Each year there are various professional development sessions (Purdue University's Road School – Transportation Conference and Expo, Stormwater Conference, Water Works Annual Summit, etc.) that the Engineering Department team attends in order to coordinate and collaborate with local contractors and other public agencies. Attending these meetings/conferences allows the Department to learn, improve and maximize project outcomes. In addition, the knowledge gained from attending these meetings/conferences ensures the Department is always up to date with the latest technologies available to reduce project costs, maximize the life span of infrastructure projects and the latest environmental sustainability approaches.

Green Infrastructure and Stormwater Management

1. What sustainability measures are currently in place for stormwater management in Valparaiso?

The City of Valparaiso, has been a proactive leader when addressing both utility challenges and environmental responsibilities. The City began on a journey to develop a long-term plan for sustainable management of the City's stormwater infrastructure in 1996 with the development of a Stormwater Board.

Since then, under the leadership of the Jon Costas Administration, the City has made great strides in assessing the operation and condition of our underground stormwater utility assets and having a financial plan in place to ensure that these assets are improved, maintained and repaired.

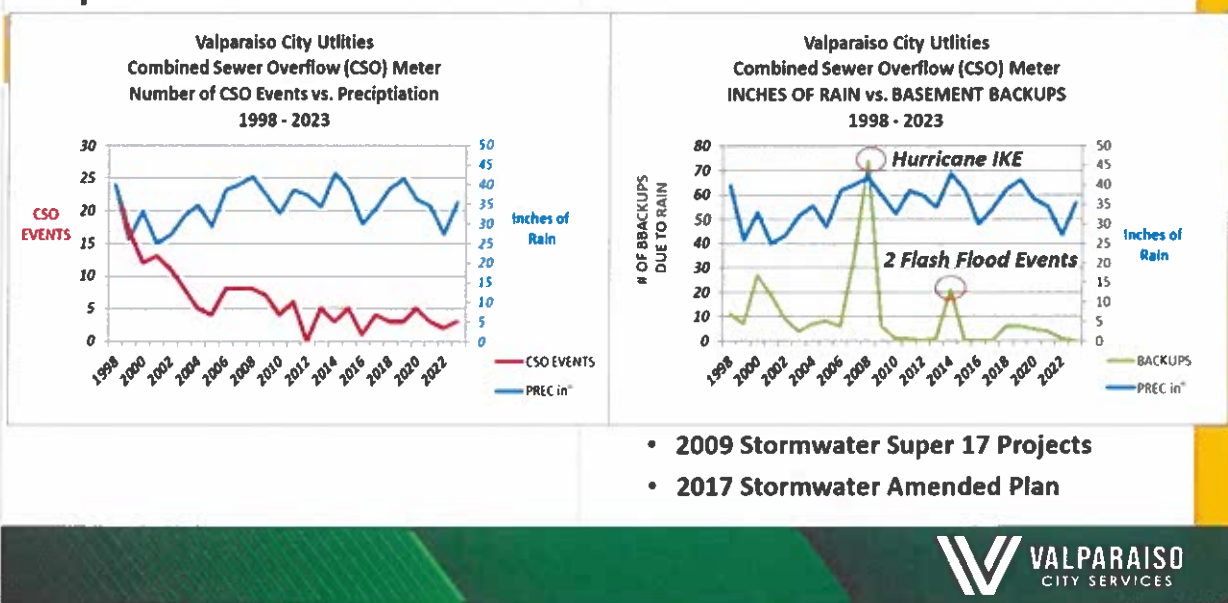
STORMWATER MASTER PLAN 2009

The City identified and developed 17 major stormwater improvement projects in November of 2009. A financial plan sets the framework for these stormwater capital projects over the next ten years, with the understanding that the plan would be reevaluated and updated on a regular basis to incorporate needs within the City as they arise. As of today, the majority of the "Super 17" stormwater projects have been completed plus an additional 50 plus related stormwater infrastructure improvements.

The financial method to achieve completion of these projects was via a 2010 bond issue and two phases of rate increases that adjusted storm water fees from \$3.00 per month to \$7.00 per month in 2010 and finally to \$11.00 per month in 2011. City residents have received quality of life improvements with reduced surface flooding, significant reductions in basement backups, reduced combined sewer overflow (CSO) events and lower discharge volumes into Salt Creek, and the reduction of property losses during heavy rain events.

The table below illustrates the reduction in Combined Sewer Overflow Events/Volume in addition to the significant reduction in basement backups due to the city's sustainability efforts over the years. This has significantly reduced the pollution of our waterways and also the quality of life of Valparaiso residents. Additionally, any combined sewer overflow event to Salt Creek is properly treated with screening, primary treatment and disinfection thus meeting the required water quality-based effluent limits.

Combined Sewer Overflows AND Basement Backup Reports.....



PLAN REVISIONS 2017

Major flash flooding in August of 2014 resulted in two separate 100-year storms that were six days apart from each other. The result of these flash flood events required the City to further study the stormwater needs throughout the Valparaiso watersheds and to reevaluate the City's 2010 Stormwater Master Plan. These recently completed planning efforts by the City have determined updated stormwater priorities in 2017. The City's revised Stormwater Master Plan identified declining critical infrastructure that required immediate attention based upon the long-term impacts to the community. The need for these projects considers the destructive impacts and the financial risks of not correcting these issues with respect to personal injury and property damage.

The financial strategy to move forward with the revised Stormwater Master Plan was devised into a five-year plan totaling \$15.2 million in order to satisfactorily complete a majority of these projects. In February of 2017 the City Council approved a rate increase and \$10 million dollar bond issue that would allow these critical projects and other stormwater capital needs to be completed within a reasonable five-year period of time. An incremental rate increase of \$0.50 per year starting in 2017 was imposed on all residential users thus resulting in a final residential stormwater rate of \$12.50 per month. A progress report of these projects is available upon request.

BEAUTY CREEK CRITICAL WATERSHED

A critical part of the Stormwater Master Plan included major drainage improvement projects within the Beauty Creek watershed. The watershed is comprised of roughly 2,200 acres of land draining via four streams which converge immediately south of the St. Paul Church property on Harrison Boulevard. Community growth, land use changes, heavier rainstorms, steep terrain, and sandy soil conditions have contributed to the soil erosion conditions and property damage along the reaches of each stream. The City hired an engineering consultant in 2015 to study the watershed and provide regional solutions to improve conditions. Meetings were held with the affected public as a part of the study to gather input. The completed study and feedback from residents determined a need to reduce the flow of water by constructing upland detention ponds and these projects were integrated within the revised Stormwater Master Plan.

The City has moved forward to implementing these recommendations with detention pond work at the Valparaiso High School in partnership with Valparaiso Community Schools. Separate detention basins have also been constructed along the west end of the Forest Park golf course. Bank stabilization projects have been accomplished along the channels immediately downstream from these pond improvements.

THE BROOKS OF VALE PARK STORMWATER BASINS

The Brooks project was a large-scale continuation of the watershed study conclusions and closely resembles the other already completed Beauty Creek watershed projects. The Brooks project reduces the flow rates along the Beauty Creek streams significantly and reduce the potential for continued soil erosion and property impacts. This was accomplished by strategically locating detention ponds with a volume of 100 acre-feet at the far northwest and northeast corners of the development. The Brooks development is located downhill from 1000 acres of surrounding land and is well situated to accomplish the regional stormwater objectives. The neighboring storm sewer systems and main Beauty Creek channel are now diverted toward the newly created detention basins with the outcome of reducing downstream flow rates. The Brooks project has proven to be an example for other communities to follow when working to accomplish large scale watershed improvement goals.

Finally, a yearly five-year capital plan is introduced to the VCU Board of Directors for approval that addresses stormwater needs. Additionally, the 2025-2029 VCS Strategic Plan addresses the future update of the Stormwater Master Plan.

2. Are there policies requiring green infrastructure solutions, such as rain gardens, permeable pavement, or bioswales, in new developments?

Green infrastructure has been used in many projects around the City. For example: there are rain gardens on the south side of Central Park, permeable pavement and rain gardens at the parking lots at Jefferson Street, underground detention at the housing development at Calkins Hill, hydrodynamic separators at projects such as Belle Tire, etc.

Implementations such as rain gardens, permeable pavement, and bioswales show great promise in their effectiveness, however, maintenance of these types of implementations are crucial. The City pushes for green infrastructure on the other hand solutions such as stormwater detention and other manageable solutions prove to show superior long-term results for stormwater quality.

Please reference Chapter 8 of the Stormwater Technical Standards Manual. Generally, the most common post-construction best management practices (BMPs) for large developments are to construct detention pond(s). However, there are many green infrastructure solutions available to a development that are listed in Table 8-1 of the manual.

3. Are there any stormwater runoff regulations for businesses and contractors and how are they enforced?

New developments are limited to a maximum stormwater runoff discharge rate of 0.5 cubic feet per minute (cfm) per acre as required in Chapter Six of the Stormwater Technical Standards Manual. They are enforced by requiring the petitioner to submit engineering plans and a site drainage report for the

Department's review prior to issuing a building permit. Following construction, City inspectors will review the infrastructure to confirm it was built to the submitted plan before issuing a notice of occupancy.

In addition, all stormwater discharges from any user of the City's stormwater drainage system are regulated through Chapter 54 - Illicit/Illegal and/or Connections to Storm Drainage System and Chapter 55 - Floodplain Management and Stormwater Runoff Control within the City's Code of Ordinances. The City's long established Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Program, as mandated by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, provides for the enforcement of these regulations.

Land Use and Development Policies

1. Does the City require an assessment to identify potential environmental impacts for new developments? If not, are there plans to implement such a policy?

The City can request a delineation of wetlands and floodplains for development applications that are received from a petitioner.

2. What criteria must be met before approving a land development project in terms of sustainability?

All developments must meet specific UDO requirements or seek waivers/variances of those standards if they show practical difficulty. A development also must meet the engineering standards and requirements within the City's Specifications and Standards for Acceptance of Municipal Improvements.

3. Are there any zoning requirements that promote environmental sustainability (e.g. green space preservation, tree protection, or wildlife corridors.)?

Article 4 in the UDO is for Site Capacity and Environmental Standards; Division 4.200 Resource Protection Standards. This Division within the UDO describes the minimum requirements for resource protections as it relates to open spaces.

4. What is the City's policy on invasive plant species in new developments and landscaping projects?

Appendix B in the UDO contains invasive species to be avoided, restricted plants and State of Indiana defined noxious weeds. This Appendix further lists approved plants including trees (deciduous, evergreen, and ornamental), shrubs, perennials and ground covers, native prairie and wetland plants, suitable trees for difficult sites and rain garden plants (including salt tolerant plants).

5. Are there existing guidelines to encourage or require low-water and native plant landscaping for businesses, city projects, and new developments?

Appendix B in the UDO does have a table for native plants. The UDO does not describe drought tolerant plants or requires the use of them or native plants in proposed developments.

Energy and Renewable Initiatives

1. What renewable energy projects has the city implemented, and are there plans for expansion (e.g., solar panel installations on public buildings)?

Please refer to City Services Section.

2. Are there policies or programs that encourage energy-efficient building practices for new developments or City-owned facilities?

Please refer to City Services Section.

3. Are there any incentives for businesses or residents to transition to renewable energy sources?

There are no City sponsored financial incentives for businesses or residents to transition to renewable energy sources at this time.

4. Have there been any efforts to promote the energy efficiency programs offered by NIPSCO? Do we know how many Valparaiso residents have taken advantage of their programs?

The City does not provide electric or natural gas services to our community. Promoting electric or natural gas efficiency programs would be within the purview of the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) as they are the provider of these services.

It is unknown at this time as to how many City of Valparaiso residents have taken advantage of NIPSCO's energy efficiency programs. Recommend contacting NIPSCO for the number of the City's residents who utilize the company's energy efficiency programs as this would be more of a private or confidential matter.

Recycling and Waste Management

1. How is construction and demolition waste managed in Valparaiso? Are there policies promoting reuse and recycling materials?

Contractors are responsible for removing and properly disposing of waste materials from construction sites. City projects are balanced and optimized to reduce the amount of earthwork removed from project sites. This reduces construction costs and saves time for the completion of the project.

For reuse/recycling purposes, the City works with project paving contractors(s) to deliver road millings each year to the VCS Public Works Division's construction yard for reuse/recycling purposes. Asphalt road millings are allowed to be reused in new road pavements up to certain limits in accordance with the State of Indiana's Department of Transportation at Specification 401.06.

Future Sustainability Initiatives and Goals

1. Are there any long-term sustainability plans for the city, and what key initiatives are being prioritized?

Please refer to the City Services Section and also the VCS Strategic Plan 2025 -2029. Additionally, annual adjustments are made to the City's pavement preservation program to optimize the life span of roads by allocating funds to different types of work. Stormwater sewer aging infrastructure locations are evaluated each year and stormwater sewer pipelining projects are prioritized to improve pipes before they fail and become higher-cost replacement projects.

2. How can the Environmental Advisory Board collaborate with the City Engineering Department to support sustainability goals?

As with the Engineering Department's response to Question 2 in the General Section above, collaboration and conversation is important. The Environmental Advisory Board could review successful projects from other communities which involve new environmental practices or technologies. Sharing this type of information may help reduce the costs of the City's future projects and might add to the environmental sustainability practices already in place.

Planning Department
Bob Thompson – Planning and Transit Director

General

1. What are the existing sustainability policies or practices utilized by your department?

Chapter 3 within the City of Valparaiso's Comprehensive Plan - Envision 2030 Valparaiso is titled Sustainability. It is defined as a system of success in the City's Comprehensive Plan as actions or strategies that provide the maximum collective benefit to environmental, social and economic systems.

2. Are there policies or practices that your department could easily integrate that would improve sustainability and environmental outcomes?

The Planning Department will be proceeding with an update of the City's current Comprehensive Plan. From this effort, we anticipate new code revisions within the City's UDO. We are always looking for quality development outcomes.

Unified Development Ordinance

1. How does the Planning Department utilize the UDO?

Development petitions received by the Planning Department and building permits must meet the City's ordinance requirements for building or developing a site located within the City. The UDO is used every day on every petition or permit that is submitted to assure adherence to the City's Municipal Code requirements within the zoning districts.

2. How does the UDO dictate sustainability requirements, if at all?

The UDO imposes sustainability requirements via tree preservation and replacement programs, sidewalks/pathways, street connections, lot landscaping which lists of vegetative material usage that is native or non-invasive and by steering potential development away from wetlands and other sensitive areas.

3. What sustainability requirements would be helpful to the Planning Department, if added to the UDO?

Density bonuses on a site for efforts towards environmental protection, energy conservation, green infrastructure and alternative transportation efforts.

Sustainable Transportation and Urban Planning

1. What efforts have been made to create more pedestrian friendly and bike friendly infrastructure in Valparaiso?

In accordance with the City's UDO, developments with public streets shall have sidewalks on both sides of proposed street. If a proposed development is along a pathway route designated in the 2017 Pathways Plan, they are to construct a pathway, and non-residential developments (commercial/industrial) are required to provide bike parking within the development.

The City is currently working on a new Active Transportation Plan to replace the existing 2017 Pathways Plan. This effort will include studying and planning for pedestrian friendly and bike friendly infrastructure connections between residential, parks, education, commercial areas and areas of employment.

2. Are there plans to implement complete streets policies. Ensuring safer and more sustainable road designs that incorporate green spaces and non-motorized transportation?

Underneath Chapter 5 - Mobility within the City's current Comprehensive Plan, there is a section on complete streets. The Plan encourages developing context sensitive solutions to balance safety, mobility and address all forms of transportation. The UDO does require sidewalks on all sides of a proposed road with the planting strip for trees between a road and sidewalks. One (1) of the goals for the new Active Transportation Plan's will be to connect the City's neighborhoods to destinations throughout the City with alternative forms of transportation.

3. What role does sustainability play in public transportation planning for the City.

The Valparaíso Transit Department's V-Line connects people with commercial, medical, educational and employment center destinations. As an alternative form of transportation, the V-Line is an attempt at reducing single car occupancy on the City's roadways.

Sustainable Practices for Public Lands and Parks

1. What efforts are being made to preserve green spaces and protect natural habitats in City planning?

The UDO requires open space set asides for proposed developments. Current codes protect existing floodplains, wetlands and important stormwater and natural runoff water filtration features. The UDO encourages compact development to protect natural features.

Future Sustainability Initiatives and Goals

1. Are there any long-term sustainability plans for the City, and what key initiatives are being prioritized?

Staying with benefits to the environment, social and economic development, the Planning Department will be embarking on an update to the City's Comprehensive Plan. This will address the three (3) noted goals. This Plan update will include what environmentally sensitive areas that are needed to be preserved and areas for recreational parks as the City grows. Socially, a review of the current Plan for housing attainability and areas where the City can plan and work on obtaining this goal. Economic development will be reviewed with a land use map and plan to direct future developments for business and commercial interests that provide employment needs within our community.

2. How can the Environmental Advisory Board collaborate with the City Planning Department to support sustainability goals?

The Environmental Advisory Board could participate with the City's Planning Department in updating the City's current Comprehensive Plan.

Parks and Recreation Department

Kevin Nuppau – Parks Director

Green Space Management and Conservation

1. What policies are in place to preserve and expand green spaces in Valparaiso's parks and public lands?

Although formal policies do not govern the matter, the Parks and Recreation Department is fundamentally responsible for the management of over 750 acres of parkland in Porter County. To meet the needs of projected population growth and maintain the current resident-to-park acre ratio, the 2021 Valpo Parks Master Plan (page 63) recommends adding 10 acres by the end of 2025. In response, Valpo Parks is actively looking for parkland west and south of the City of Valparaiso to achieve this expansion, enhance offerings and preserve green space.

2. How does the Parks Department determine which areas should be preserved as natural habitats versus those that should be developed for recreational use?

The redevelopment of park spaces is guided by a comprehensive evaluation rather than a single formula. Key considerations include the existing park inventory, current community needs, maintenance requirements, stormwater management (onsite and surrounding), the balance of active and passive recreation and budgetary constraints.

3. Are there any current initiatives focused on reforestation, tree planting, or native habitat restoration in city parks?

Valpo Parks actively manages and enhances natural habitats through several ongoing initiatives. These include the identification and restoration of areas to native vegetation, the implementation of no-mow zones, and annual reforestation and tree planting efforts conducted by Park staff.

Invasive species removal is also performed annually. In 2025, over 30 acres of parkland at Rogers Lakewood Park received dedicated attention for habitat management. Annually, approximately 25 native trees with a caliper of 1.5 inches or greater are planted in park space.

Pesticide, Herbicide and Land Maintenance Policies

1. What are the current policies on pesticide, herbicide, and fertilizer use in parks and public spaces?

Valpo Parks employs a responsible and integrated approach to pest and vegetation management. Our staff includes seven (7) licensed pesticide applicators, and we adhere to a policy of using zero restricted-use pesticide products, opting instead for low active ingredient formulations. Herbicides are strategically applied for weed control in landscaped areas with a primary focus on combating invasive species. Recognizing the ecological challenges of the southern Lake Michigan region, a biodiversity hotspot facing significant invasive plant pressure, poison hemlock has been a key target for removal in recent years.

To support plant health, we utilize low-dose fertilization for flowers and the Central Park Plaza turf. In our greenhouse, we prioritize biological controls, employing beneficial insects like ladybugs and praying mantises as well as nematodes for natural pest management. Additionally, Valpo Parks utilizes

prescribed burns as an ecological tool to manage invasive species and reduce the reliance on chemical pesticides.

2. Is there an effort to transition to organic or environmentally friendly alternatives for weed and pest control?

Our staff includes seven (7) licensed pesticide applicants, and we adhere to a policy of using zero restricted-use pesticide products, opting instead for low active ingredient formulations.

3. How frequently are parks and public lands mowed, and has there been consideration for reduced mowing in certain areas to promote biodiversity and pollinator habitats?

The standard operational practice for turf management in most Valpo Parks is weekly mowing, adjusted as necessary due to weather. This supports public enjoyment and healthy turf conditions. In contrast, specific areas have been designated as no-mow zones to promote ecological benefits.

All mowing is performed at a height of three (3) inches or greater. This practice promotes healthier, more resilient turf that is better able to withstand local climate conditions and public use, while also contributing to more sustainable park management practices.

Water Conservation and Stormwater Management

1. How does the Parks Department manage stormwater runoff in public parks to prevent pollution and erosion?

To ensure effective stormwater management in its existing and future parklands, Valpo Parks collaborates closely with the City of Valparaiso Engineering Department in the development and implementation of appropriate strategies. Recognizing its role as part of the City, Valpo Parks operates in accordance with the City's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Program. The City's MS4 Program, as mandated by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, regulates stormwater discharges into the City's stormwater drainage system.

Note: Refer to Chapter 54 - Illicit/Illegal and/or Connections to Storm Drainage System of the City's Code of Ordinances.

2. Are there any efforts to implement rain gardens, bioswales, or permeable pavement in parks to improve stormwater absorption?

Valpo Parks employs green infrastructure such as rain gardens and bioswales in numerous locations for effective stormwater management. A permeable pavement is not currently part of our park infrastructure. A key example of our commitment to these practices is the signature bioswale at Bicentennial Park.

3. What initiatives are in place to reduce water usage in public parks, such as drought-resistant landscaping or irrigation system improvements?

Valpo Parks is significantly investing in water management with the installation of a new \$2 million irrigation system at Forest Park Golf Course, featuring enhanced controls for optimized water usage. Irrigation is also utilized in select landscape areas across our parks and is regularly monitored by staff

to minimize water waste. Targeted irrigation systems, specifically MP rotator heads, have been deployed in select areas. Recognizing the City's commitment to beautification in parks, roundabouts and streetscapes which require precise watering, Valpo Parks manages these areas using either built-in irrigation systems (including rain sensors for intelligent water usage) or a watering truck, based on the Superintendent of Horticulture's assessment. Notably, drip irrigation is available at Central Park Plaza for efficient watering of specific plantings.

Waste Reduction and Recycling

1. What recycling options are currently available in Valparaiso's parks, and how does the department ensure they are effectively used?

Yes, recycling receptacles are available for staff and patron use within Valpo Parks' indoor facilities and venues. Central Park Plaza utilizes compactors for trash and recycling. However, recycling containers are not presently provided in most outdoor park locations. Internal communication promotes the use of existing recycling infrastructure among staff.

2. Has there been discussion about expanding recycling infrastructure in parks, such as dedicated compost bins or separate waste streams for different materials?

Valpo Parks demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainable waste management through its successful composting partnership with Porter County Recycling and Waste Reduction, ensuring accessible waste disposal for residents. We also offer convenient plastic bag and film recycling at various locations as well as battery disposal services. Our annual operations utilize at least 500 cubic yards of compost, and 500 cubic yards of mulch obtained from the local City/County compost facility.

Furthermore, we compost our seasonal plant material for use in general landscaping applications. Valpo Parks produces approximately 90% of its plant needs with the remaining 10% consisting mainly of trees and shrubs which are sourced regionally.

3. Are there any initiatives in place to reduce single-use plastics in park facilities, events, and concession areas?

Valpo Parks is implementing several initiatives to reduce reliance on single-use plastics. This includes installing water fountains in various parks, encouraging reusable water bottle use at Discovery Day Camp and reducing the availability of plastic water bottles at special events. Dedicated plastic recycling receptacles will be made available during events in 2025. Valpo Parks has been engaged with Porter County Recycling and Waste Reduction and The Plastic Reduction Alliance of NWI to explore additional initiatives.

Community Engagement and Education

1. Does the Parks Department have any programs that educate the community about environmental sustainability and conservation?

While specific educational programs are not offered, many of our current initiatives utilize their structure and content to educate participants on a range of topics. The Valpo Parks website has critical

information for residents to utilize as it pertains to selecting plants, native landscaping and invasive plants at <https://valpoparks.org/289/Horticulture>.

2. How can the Environmental Advisory Board collaborate with Parks and Recreation to promote sustainability initiatives within the community?

Exploring available funding opportunities would be beneficial. Encourage residents to contribute to the "Tree Fund" to support reforestation and tree planting in parks. Furthermore, organizing volunteer groups could support various departmental efforts.

3. What opportunities exist for volunteers or local organizations to contribute to sustainability efforts in Valparaiso's parks (e.g., tree planting, invasive species removal, community gardens)?

Valpo Parks actively promotes environmental stewardship and community engagement through the activities listed. We collaborate with local organizations on tree planting, litter removal and invasive species removal. Our community garden program further empowers residents to grow their own food.

Additional Comments (Not Asked by the EAB or Answered Above)

1. Sustainability Initiatives

- *Solar Lighting: Solar-powered lighting has been implemented in parks and parking lots over the past several years.*
- *LED Lighting Upgrades: Ongoing upgrades aim to replace all incandescent and fluorescent bulbs with LED lighting in both indoor and outdoor spaces.*
- *Solar Panel Exploration: Valpo Parks is exploring the feasibility of installing solar panels at select facilities as recommended in the Energy Efficiency Audit completed in March of 2025.*
- *Vehicle and Equipment Transition: The department plans to transition gas-powered vehicles and maintenance equipment to hybrid and/or battery-powered alternatives when applicable.*

2. Habitat and Pollinator Support

- *Wildflower Planting: More than 50 acres of wildflowers have been planted in the last three years.*
- *Pollinator Gardens: Active community garden, honeybee hives, moth garden, and pollinator garden sites are maintained within our parks.*
- *Prescribed Burns: Periodic prescribed burns are conducted for land management and ecological benefits.*
- *Creek Clean-Up: The Salt Creek corridor, a significant waterway traveling through Valparaiso from Joliet Road to Creekside Park, is being addressed through a clean-up effort. This includes the removal of debris and trees to facilitate enhanced water quality and natural habitat.*
- *Lake Enhancement: Water fountains and aerators are installed on Spectacle and Loomis Lake in Rogers Lakewood Park to promote oxygenation, aquatic life, and odor control.*
- *Wild Animal Care: Any wild animal in distress inside a park gets transported to Humane Indiana, a strategic partner of Valpo Parks.*

3. Alternative Transportation

- *Non-Motorized Encouragement: Events, programs, and infrastructure promote non-motorized transportation. The City of Valparaiso offers over 24 miles of pathways, 15 miles of trails, and bike lanes.*

4. Community Engagement

- *Kid's Closet Sale: Valpo Parks hosts a Kid's Closet Sale to facilitate the sale of gently used children's items.*

5. Horticulture Division 2024 Accomplishments

- *Planted over 1000 bulbs.*
- *Removed and treated invasive and dangerous plant material across the City of Valparaiso including but not limited to Poison Hemlock, Poison Ivy, White Mulberry tree, Autumn Olive, Japanese Knotweed and Flowering Pear Trees.*
- *Planted native prairie restoration seed on over 50 acres between the redevelopment property and Creekside.*
- *Planted over 340 trees and tree saplings.*
- *Produced and planted 1200 flats of summer flowers (21600 plants).*
- *Produced and planted 150 flats of spring Pansies.*
- *Purchased and planted another 150 flats of Pansies.*
- *Produced and planted 550 fall Chrysanthemums.*
- *Produced and used 1000 6" pots of perennials, cannas, and tropical Colocasia.*
- *Produced and used 600 ornamental kales for fall.*

City Services Department (Public Works and Utilities)

Steve Poulos – Valparaiso City Services (VCS) Executive Director

Waste Management & Recycling

1. What are the current recycling policies and programs in Valparaiso for both residential and commercial properties?

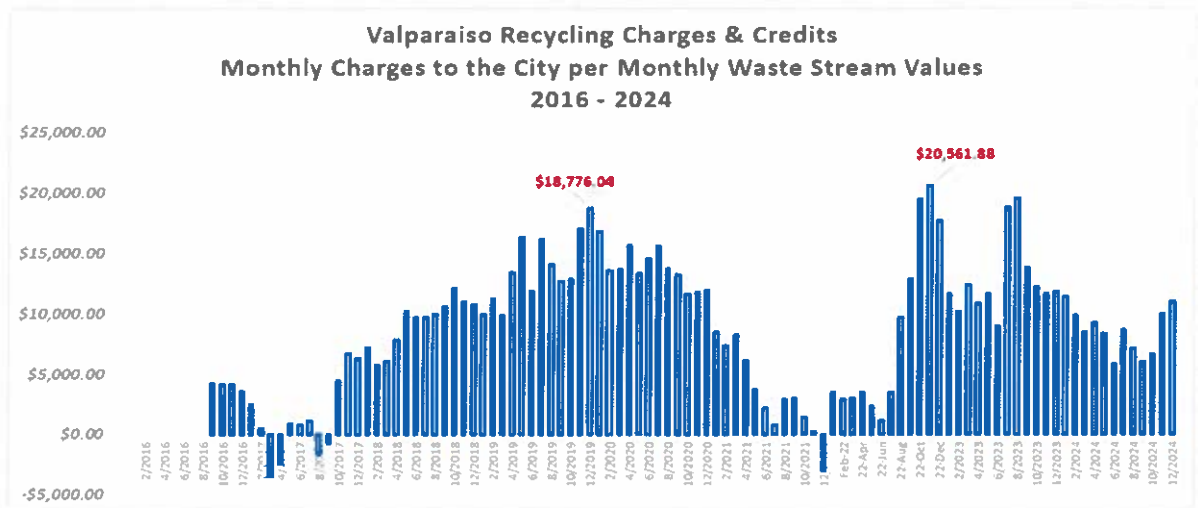
Refer to the Trash and Recycling Executive Summary dated June 2022 and Chapter 53 - Refuse and Recycling as revised in September of 2022 within the City's Code of Ordinances for current recycling information.

2. Given the cancellation of programs in neighboring towns (Gary, Hobart, Portage), what is the status of the curbside recycling program in Valparaiso? Based on past performance, does the city have plans to reduce or expand recycling?

The status of the City's curbside recycling program has not changed since the VCU's Trash and Recycling Committee's recent recommendations on this matter were presented and executed by the City's Common Council in August of 2022.

Per our discussions with nearby communities who have eliminated recycling, there was no tangible data or operational strategy in making their final determination.

Due to the continued volatility in the recycling market as referenced in the recycling exhibit below for 2016 - 2024, Valparaiso City Services through its Strategic Plan (2025-2029) has and will continue to study the future of recycling and provide recommendations to the City's Administration and Common Council as appropriate.



Some of the options being studied and considered as part of the Public Works Division's Business Plan include:

- *Maintaining the current program by the Trash and Recycling Committee's recommendations in 2022.*
- *Continue bi-weekly curbside pickup of paper and cardboard only and offer drop-site location for other recyclables.*
- *Discontinue bi-weekly curbside pickup and offer drop-site location(s) only.*
- *Offer dual-stream, curbside recycle pickup for paper and cardboard only.*

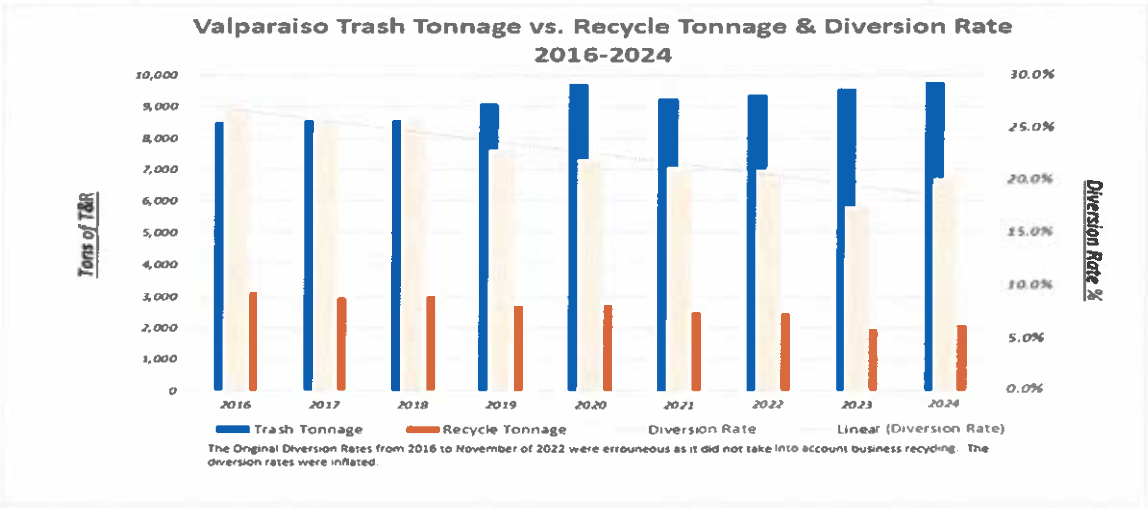
These options are currently being logistically and financially analyzed.

3. Are there any specialized recycling programs in place or being considered (e.g., cardboard-only recycling, composting, hazardous waste disposal)?

See the response in question #2 above and the billing insert for the Household Hazardous Waste Program in conjunction with Porter County Recycling and Waste Reduction.

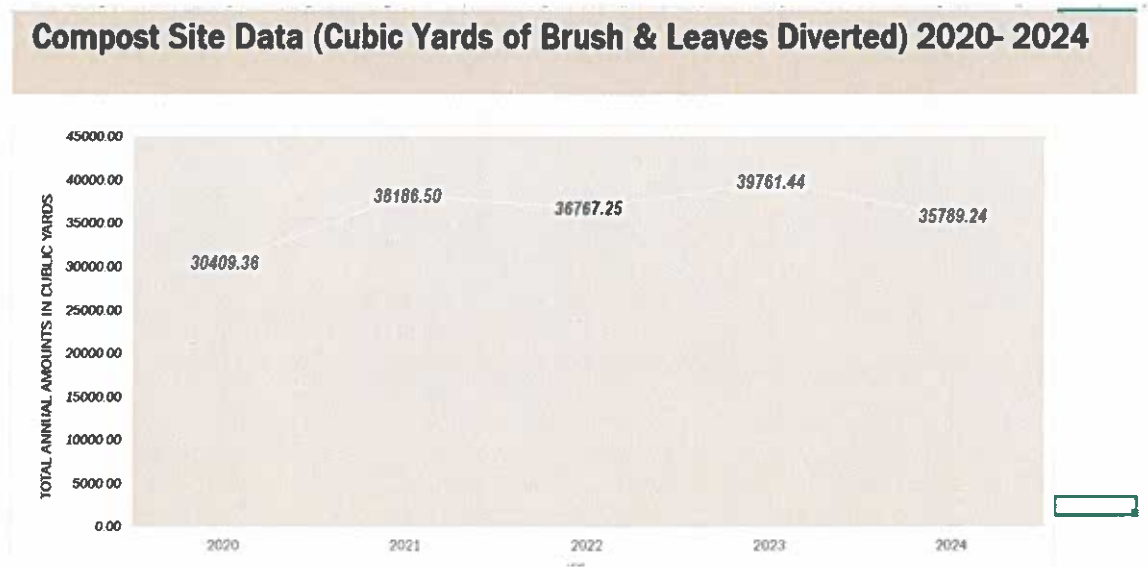
4. What percentage of the city's waste is currently diverted from landfills through recycling and composting efforts?

The City's recycling landfill diversion rate is approximately 20% as shown in the exhibit below:



Also be advised that VCS embarked on a public 26-week recycling education initiative in 2023. The recycling education program included direct mail, email, video, social media and web presence. This was funded with support from a grant from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management as one of just 16 grant recipients for 2022.

The City's yard waste to compost landfill diversion rate is currently 36,000 cubic yards per year as shown in the exhibit below:



5. What is the status of the City's wastewater treatment operations and its industrial users? Have there been any issues or exceedances that have required intervention?

The current operational status of the City's Elden Kuehl Pollution Control Facility (EKPCF) wastewater treatment plan is excellent, and the facility is in compliance with the City's issued National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. Furthermore, the EKPCF is undergoing a major \$50.0 million upgrade at the present time.

The Elden Kuehl Pollution Control Facility has experienced one exceedance in the last 36 months of its issued NPDES Permit. Exceedances have always been resolved to the satisfaction of both the VCU and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management.

The current compliance status of the City's Industrial Users is good as they are in compliance with both Chapter 51 - Sewers and Chapter 52 - Industrial Pretreatment within the City's Code of Ordinances. Both of these ordinances regulate the connection to and the discharge into the City's Sanitary Wastewater Collection System. These regulations apply to all users of the City's Sanitary Collection System.

There have been periodic wastewater discharges over the years from residents, private contractors, commercial establishments and industrial users into the City's Sanitary Collection System which were not in compliance with the above referenced ordinances. These situations required enforcement actions undertaken by the Water Reclamation Department, as the Control Authority, to bring these non-compliant discharges successfully back into compliance to the satisfaction of the VCU.

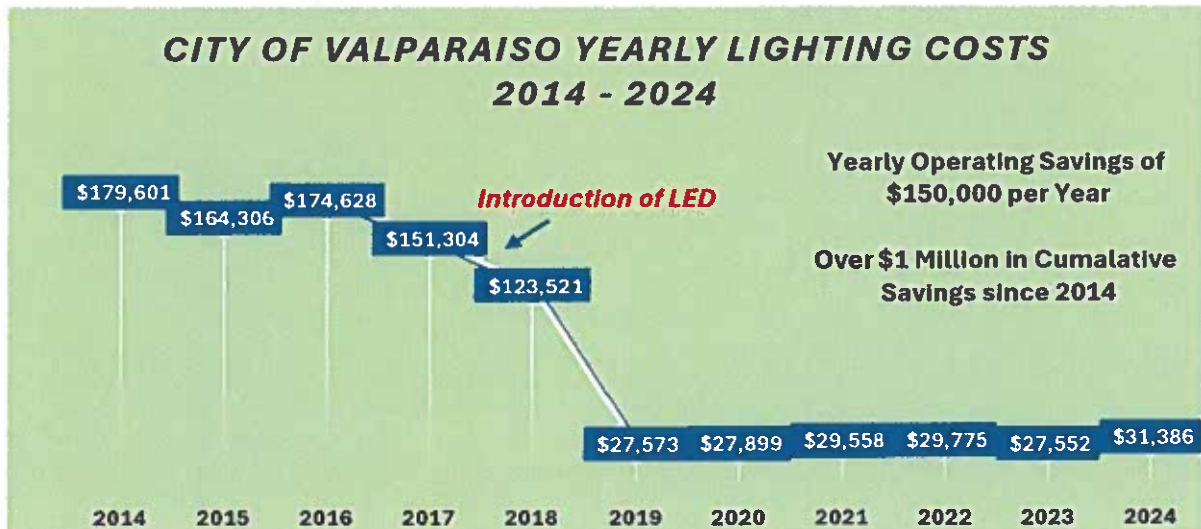
Energy & Water Conservation in Public Infrastructure

1. What measures has the Public Works Department taken to increase energy efficiency in city-owned buildings and infrastructure?

For the VCU's Public Works Division, City owned facilities and streetlights have been upgraded for energy efficiency. Some of the upgrades include the following:

- There are 850 City owned streetlights currently accounted for by the Public Works Division. There are streetlights along City streets and in parking lots. This number doesn't include what is located inside City parks. All City owned streetlights have been converted to LED (light emitting diode) lighting. Note: the 850 count is light fixtures and not poles. Some poles have two light fixtures mounted on them. Downtown Streetscape activities will add more LEDs when completed.*
- City Hall: 2019 Renovation upgraded most of the building to LED lighting. New HVAC System in the new addition, basement and administrative offices. Solar panels installed on the roof.*
- Police Department: Parking lot lights to LED. Replacement of all seven (7) HVAC System units on the building's rooftop in 2023 and 2024.*

As can be seen in the exhibit below, the City of Valparaiso's yearly lighting cost have shown a steady decrease from 2014 through 2024. This decrease in the City's electrical costs is due to the increase in energy efficiency of City-owned buildings and infrastructure in spite of any electric rate increases imposed NIPSCO. The City has saved approximately \$1.0 million in lighting costs over this time frame.



For the VCU's Water and Water Reclamation Divisions, VCU has recognized both the challenges and opportunities in energy efficiency and implemented various measures to reduce energy consumption and operational costs over the past 20 years. Going back to the 3 Tier Energy Approach within the VCU's Energy Sustainability Policy, the key initiatives include:

- Operational plant optimization based on true energy needs.
- Implementation of electric power demand management strategies, including power factor correction capacitors.
- Evaluation and selection of the most cost-effective NIPSCO electric rate plans for both water and wastewater operations.
- Participation in NIPSCO energy efficiency incentive programs for both water and wastewater plants.
- Installation of variable frequency drives (VFDs) on motors and pumps for both water and wastewater plants.
- Installation of premium high efficiency motors and pumps for both water and wastewater plants
- Capital upgrades of biological aeration system to have high efficiency blowers and fine bubble diffusers for wastewater plant which uses significant power.
- Expansion of primary clarifiers in the wastewater plant to enhance the primary treatment efficiencies and reduce energy needs within the operation.
- Replacement of traditional lighting with energy-efficient LED fixtures at water and wastewater plants
- Generation of renewable methane gas through sludge digestion, utilized to supplement energy needs at the wastewater plant.
- Integration of renewable solar energy systems at both water and wastewater plants has reduced energy use, provided operational costs savings and reduced CO2 emissions.

As a result of VCU's proactive approach to energy efficiency management and sustainability, substantial reduction in energy consumption, greenhouse gases and associated cost savings have been realized from 2004 to the present. These actions by VCU and the associated results are summarized in Table E.2.1 of the VCU Energy Sustainability Policy which shows the combined energy improvements, total cost savings (\$5 million) and the reduction in greenhouse gases (31,851 metric tons of CO₂) at both the water and wastewater treatment plants.

For further details on energy sustainability at VCU, refer to the VCU Energy Sustainability Policy as developed in 2008 and as amended in 2016 and 2024.

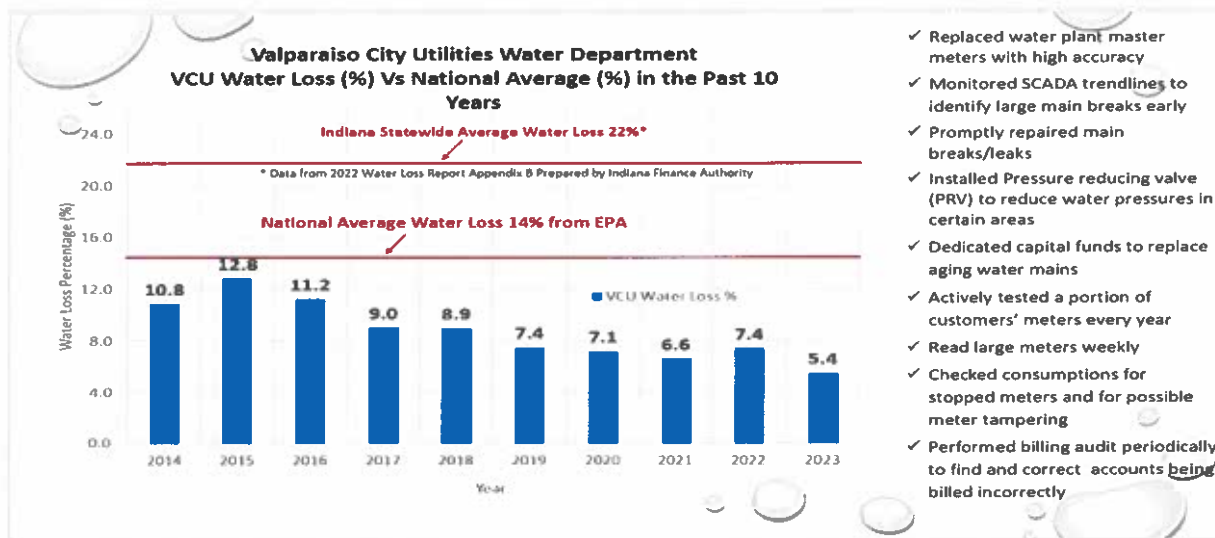
2. Are there plans to expand the use of renewable energy sources (e.g., solar panels, energy-efficient streetlights) within the department's operations?

Per the data that has been provided throughout the responses from the City and Valparaiso City Services within this questionnaire and based on our operational performance over the last 20 years, it is evident that the City will continue to pursue all types of energy opportunities when it makes environmental, financial and social sense.

3. What steps are being taken to reduce water consumption in city-managed facilities and infrastructure?

There are no City managed facilities that are a large consumer of potable water and the majority of the City owned buildings within the City use minimal amounts of potable water for restrooms, kitchens and water fountains. The wastewater treatment plant uses treated final effluent reclaimed water from the treatment process for operational use thus eliminating the need of utilizing potable water.

The exhibit below provides a 10-year water loss history and the methods that have been utilized to reduce water loss within our community. VCU is below the Indiana and National State averages. Highlights include monitoring SCADA trendlines to identify water loss, promptly repairing main breaks/leaks, adjusting pressures within the distribution system and a dedicated aging infrastructure plan.



Stormwater & Green Infrastructure Management

1. What policies are currently in place to manage stormwater runoff and prevent pollution from entering local waterways?

Please refer to Chapters 50, 51 and 52 within the City of Valparaiso's Code of Ordinances which outlines these standards and prohibitions. Also refer to the Engineering section.

2. Does the city use or plan to implement green infrastructure solutions (e.g., rain gardens, permeable pavement, bioswales) to improve water management?

Refer to the Engineering section.

3. How does the city ensure that contractors and developers comply with stormwater regulations to prevent erosion and water contamination?

Refer to the Engineering section.

Sustainable Transportation & Fleet Management

1. Is the city taking steps to transition its vehicle fleet to more fuel-efficient or electric vehicles?

Refer to the VCS's Strategic Plan (2025 - 2029) for VCU's plans to investigate transitioning the VCU's vehicle fleet to a more fuel efficient or electric vehicles. Additionally, VCU will be receiving funding for an electric vehicle in 2025 and has applied for grant funds for a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Station.

*Most recently VCS has applied for grants and has been awarded funding for **Electric Vehicle Truck Funding** as the City of Valparaiso is a subrecipient under the City of Lake Station (Prime) for the "Lake and Porter County ZEV" project.*

Under this project the City of Valparaiso is allocated \$33,280 towards the purchase of an all-electric vehicle and \$16,000 towards the purchase and installation of a level 2 public charging station. The allocated amounts cannot exceed 80% of the funding allocated towards the project price.

Project Cost Example

Project	City Cost Share	City Match	Total
Electric Vehicle	\$33,280	\$4,000	\$18,720
Electric Charging Station	\$16,000	\$4,000	\$20,000

CNG Funding

CNG Funding will be available this summer 2025 for trucks as infrastructure or fueling stations has been held up by the new administration.

The grant that has been applied for by VCS is as follows:

The CFI Grant Application Details: City of Valparaiso, 1855 Joliet Rd, Valparaiso, CNG Community, \$775,194 (Cost), \$620,155(Request), \$155,039 (Cost Share)

2. Are there any initiatives to improve public transportation infrastructure or support bike-friendly and pedestrian-friendly city planning?

Defer to the City's Engineering Director and/or the Planning and Transit Director on this issue.

3. Has the department considered policies to reduce road salt usage in winter due to its environmental impact on soil and water quality?

Refer to the Appendix for a detailed emailed response dated January 28, 2025 from the City Services Executive Director to Councilmember Ms. Kapitan regarding the Public Works Division's use of road salt during the winter season.

Community Engagement and Future Sustainability Goals

1. What sustainability initiatives or programs is the Public Works Department currently prioritizing?

Sustainability initiatives and/or programs for the Public Works Division are stated in the VCS Strategic Plan (2025-2029) and include the following four (4) goals to be completed by the end of 2029: Recycling Future; Route Improvements; Optimizing Technological Resources and exploring the Business Case for Electric and CNG Fleet.

Other sustainability initiatives are included within the current \$76 million dollar capital upgrades of the Water and Wastewater facilities as outlined within the VCU Energy Sustainability Policy.

2. How can the Environmental Advisory Board collaborate with Public Works to support sustainability efforts and policy improvements in Valparaiso.

Based upon the data that has been provided throughout the responses from the Valparaiso City Services and the goals contained within the VCS Strategic Plan (2025-2029), opportunities for participation and input by the EAB will become available as VCS moves forward with identified strategic initiatives.

Water Quality

1. What contaminants are tested for in drinking water?

Refer to the contaminants tested in our community's drinking water as shown in the VCU Water Division's Water Quality Report for 2024 at <https://www.valparaisoutilities.org>.

2. What, if any, are new concerns for contaminants (PFAs)?

As of today, there are no new concerns for emerging containments in the City of Valparaiso's raw or finished water as testing has illustrated non detectable levels of PFAS. This includes per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAs).

3. What is the status of the lead pipe identification and replacement project?

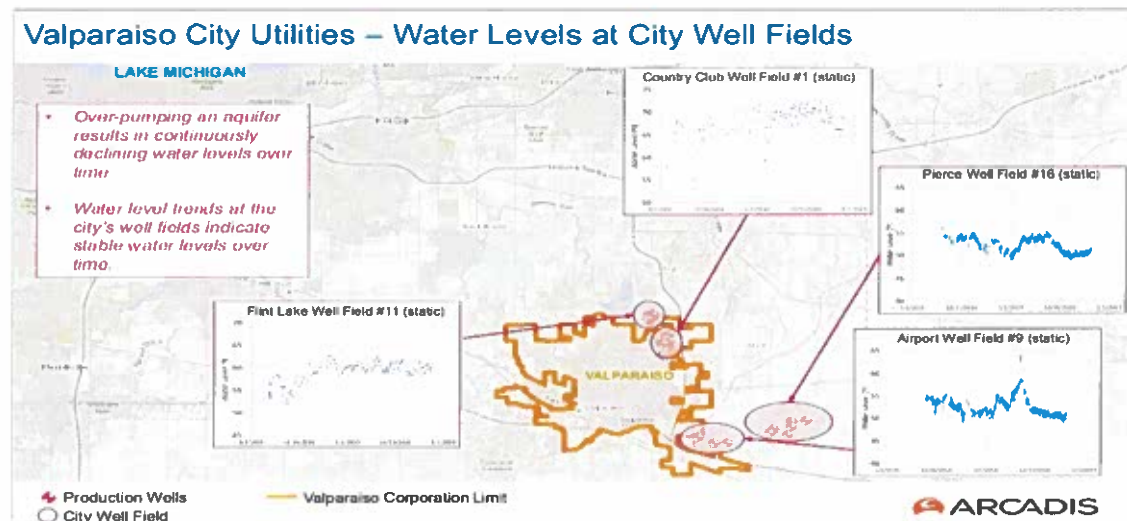
Refer to the VCU's Lead and Copper Rule for Drinking Water at <https://www.valparaisoutilities.org> and the fact sheet that is included in the Appendix.

4. How are wellheads managed?

Wellheads are managed through the VCUs long time established Wellhead Protection Program. This is in accordance with Chapter 50 - Water Works within the City's Code of Ordinances and is mandated by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management.

5. Aquifers

Static levels of various wellfields within the city are continually monitored. Groundwater use is distributed throughout many production wells to alleviate over pumping especially during high demand.



Building Department
Vicki Thrasher – Building and Code Enforcement Director

General

1. What are the existing sustainability policies or practices utilized by your department?
Refer to the above sections as the building department collaborates with all City departments.
2. Are there policies or practices that your department could easily integrate that would improve sustainability and environmental outcomes?

None at this time.

Code Enforcement

1. What are the most common environmentally related enforcement cases involving residents, developers and commercial businesses?

The most common environmentally related enforcement cases are for high grass, overgrown vegetation and various forms of debris collected on a property that is located within the City.

2. Are the ramifications for a code violation sufficient to deter continued violations in such cases?

Yes, in most cases.

3. What outreach campaigns on specific issues help educate residents and business and potentially decrease violation?

None at this time. These types of violations of the City's Municipal Codes are not a result of a lack of education or understanding by a property owner for their responsibilities, but rather are a result of financial hardship, mental health issues and/or out of town City property owners.

Path Forward

The City of Valparaiso and its Departments have been in the past and will be in the future proactive in addressing environmental matters in our community. This is evident in the in-depth answers provided by the City's Departments that are contained within this document to the questions presented in the Valparaiso Environment Advisory Board's recent inquiry.

It is no accident that the City of Valparaiso is a recognized leader in environmental stewardship throughout the State of Indiana. Each of the City's Departments utilize technical skill and knowledge, strategic and operational planning, fiscal responsibility, timely capital improvements where appropriate, implementation of new technologies, continued compliance with federal, state and local regulations along with the enforcement of the City's *Municipal Code* in order to deliver a better quality of life to our community. This includes the meticulous evaluation of any newly proposed environmental sustainability policy or practice.

Responsible environmental management, sustainability of the surrounding ecosystem and the preservation of existing natural resources have all been valued as a necessity for a thriving community. This culture is already ingrained in each of the City's Departments on a day-to-day basis and has been understood by the City's residents, civic organizations, commercial interests and local industry for many decades.

End of Responses

APPENDIX

SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS

- ✓ **Public Works Refuse and Recycling Operations Review Executive Summary
June 2022**
- ✓ **Chapter 53: Refuse and Recycling Ordinance Amended in 2022**
- ✓ **Porter County Recycling & Waste Reduction 2025 Household Hazardous Waste
Collection**
- ✓ **Valparaiso City Utilities Energy Sustainability Policy**
- ✓ **Fact Sheet Valparaiso Lead Service Inventory Program**
- ✓ **2025-2029 Valparaiso City Services Strategic Plan**
- ✓ **Road Salt Use – Email Response to Ellen Kapitan January 28, 2025**
- ✓ **Request for Information Email Ellen Kapitan & Questions for Department Heads**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The operating budgets for Municipal Utilities and Public Works Departments throughout the United States have experienced significant and ongoing stress for at least the past decade due to a combination of a number of common and identifiable factors. Some of those factors include the expansion of services without accurate fiscal consideration, the increase in the cost for needed equipment upgrades, the implementation of new and efficient computer technologies, retainage of personnel and additional environmental regulation. The operating budgets across each of the Divisions of the Valparaiso City Services (VCS) have also been under stress for several of these same reasons.

In the existing situation of the VCS Public Works Division's refuse/garbage and recycling collection operations, the main causes for current budgetary pressures includes the continued growth of the City of Valparaiso (City), ongoing capital outlays in order to keep pace with the physical expansion of the corporate limits of the community and the yearly increases in the overall cost of doing business. A few examples of the specific factors negatively impacting these operations include the incremental rising of landfill disposal costs incurred by the City since 2014, the doubling of recycling costs over time with a very small opportunity for recycling credits since 2018 and the current refuse/garbage collection fee not being increased since 2012 while continuing to provide free community-wide recycling services in addition to other accommodations that are becoming increasingly cost prohibitive.

Due to these facts, the City Administration concluded the need to pursue a goal of reviewing and determining refuse/garbage collection and/or recycling user fees that are reasonable for the community in order to sustain the solid waste collection and disposal services provided by the VCS Public Works Division. To achieve the City Administration's specified goal, a VCS Public Works Division Trash and Recycling Committee was established for the expressed purpose of calculating a new refuse/garbage collection fee that was reasonable and competitive on behalf of our community by defining sustainable environmentally sound solutions and determining best practices for solid waste disposal and recycling management. The Committee included representatives from Valparaiso City Services, City Administration, the City of Valparaiso's Common Council and the Porter County Recycling and Waste Reduction Department.

After a lengthy review of the various aspects of the Division's refuse/garbage and recycling operations by utilizing specific strategies, the Committee concluded that even though the City of Valparaiso currently provides a high level of service to the community's residents and customers, there is still room for improvement in the Division's overall refuse/garbage and recycling operations. Based upon the Committee's review, the Committee is proposing the following recommendations to achieve the City Administration's specified goal:

1. Increasing the City of Valparaiso's residential customer solid waste collection and disposal rate from the current flat rate of \$12.00/month to \$19.50/month starting sometime in 2022. This would provide a 62% increase over existing revenues for the Division and properly fund current operations.
2. Implementation of efficiency improvements to the Division's current operations.
3. Revision of Chapter 53: Refuse and Recycling within the City of Valparaiso's *Code of Ordinances* in order to reflect current conditions since it was last amended in 2012.

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INTRODUCTION

Effectively managing municipal materials and solid wastes requires a highly efficient system of interconnected infrastructure and personnel. Deciding upon the most strategic approaches for these purposes requires thoughtful planning. This includes a combination of a periodic reevaluation of current customer user fees, operational improvements, environmental considerations and regulatory review.

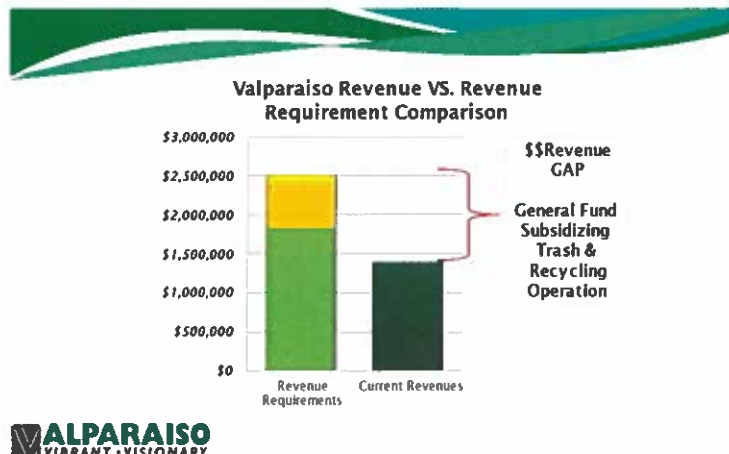
The VCS Public Works Division Trash and Recycling Committee utilized the following strategies in order to achieve the City's goal of reviewing and determining refuse/garbage collection and/or recycling user fees that are reasonable for the community in order to sustain the solid waste collection and disposal services provided by the Public Works Division:

1. Conducted a financial analysis to determine the "true" cost of providing refuse/garbage and recycling services to the City of Valparaiso. This included a review of the Public Works Division's operational cash disbursements by Baker Tilly, LLP.⁽¹⁾
2. Discussions and/or interviews with neighboring communities regarding their refuse/garbage and recycling decisions.
3. An evaluation of privatization.
4. Internal operational audit of the refuse/garbage and recycling operations of the Public Works Division by Strategic Business Services, LLC.⁽²⁾
5. A review of the City of Valparaiso's current trash and recycling ordinance regulations including Chapter 53: Refuse and Recycling within the City's *Code of Ordinances*.⁽³⁾

The Committee met on three (3) separate occasions from December, 2021 through February, 2022 to review the progress and the results of the above strategies.⁽⁴⁾ An examination of the results of those strategies are as follows:

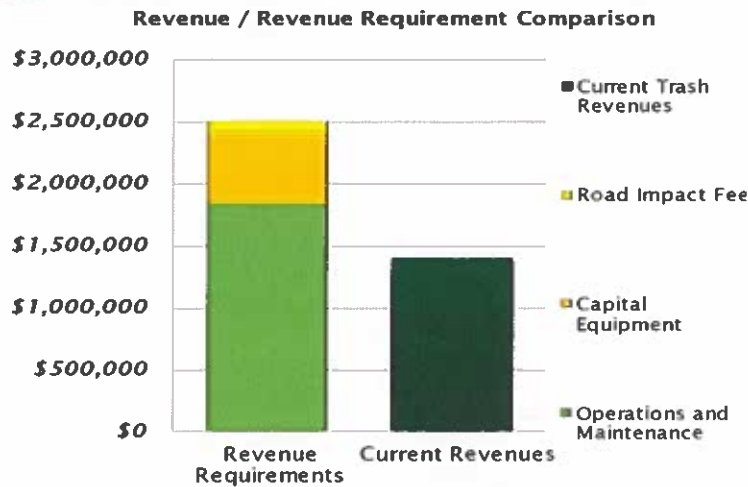
FINANACIAL ANALYSIS

The previous City of Valparaiso Administration had approximately \$300,000 available per year in County Economic Development Income Tax or CEDIT funds for road paving projects within the City. Based on the needs of the community, it was then determined that more capital dollars would be required to fund road and sidewalk restoration. In 2012, the City evaluated the cost of providing refuse/garbage and recycling services community-wide and developed a refuse/garbage and recycling fee schedule to offset these service costs from the City's General Fund. This fee schedule and offset has been the same since being approved in 2012 and currently generates approximately \$1.3 million dollars per year.



Baker Tilly, LLP was contracted to evaluate current versus required cash disbursements to sustain the day-to-day refuse/garbage collection operations for the community. Additionally, the estimated capital requirement replacement schedule was provided as part of this analysis. The analysis determined a revenue gap of \$1.2 million dollars per year thus the City's General Fund is currently subsidizing the trash and recycling operations. This revenue gap is shown in the graph above.

To offset this revenue gap and to eliminate the City's general fund from subsidizing the trash and recycling operations, the impact to the residential customers would be an increase in the current flat rate from \$12.00 per month to \$21.70 per month. This is an increase of \$9.70 per month or a revenue requirement change of 81%.



Total Revenue Requirement Change - 81%

- Refuse/Garbage Collection Bill Impact - \$9.70 per month
- Proposed Refuse/Garbage Collection Bill - \$21.70



25

INDIANA COMMUNITIES RATE COMPARISON

The Committee surveyed all the neighboring communities in Northwest Indiana along with other communities within Indiana to determine the following:

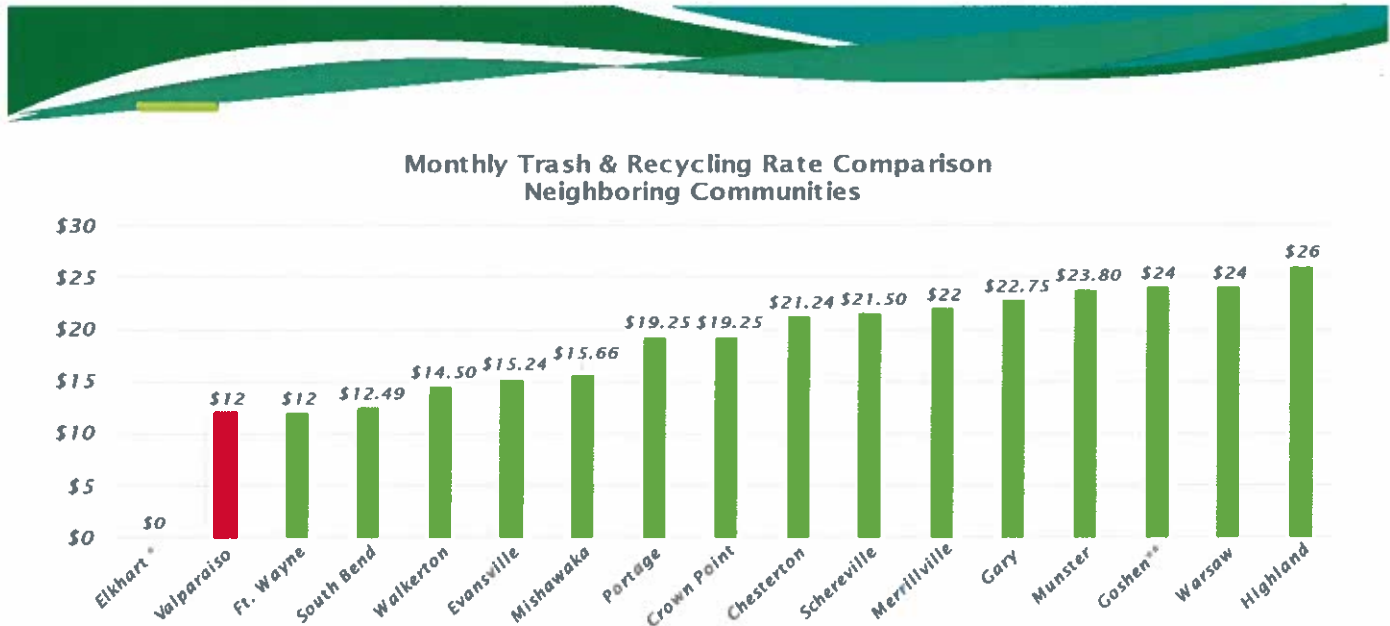
1. Do these communities manage their own trash and recycling or is it privatized?
2. How often do they collect recycling within their community?
3. What are their current fees and when were they established?

Based on the information that was provided, all of these communities have privatized their operations with an independent service (Republic Services, Able, etc.). Only one (1) other community (City of Portage) provides "in-house" services similar to those in the City of Valparaiso. Additionally, 14 out of the 17 or 82% communities provide recycling services every other week versus every week.

NEIGHBORING & OTHER COMMUNITIES				
	In-House Operation	Private Service	Do they Recycle?	How often is Recycling Done?
Chesterton		x	Y	Every other week
Portage	x		Y	Every week
Crown Point		x	Y	Every week
Highland		x	Y	Every other week
Merrillville		x	Y	Every other week
Scherville		x	Y	Every other week
Gary		x	Y	Every other week
Munster		x	Y	Every other week
Valparaiso	x	x	Y	Every Week
Elkhart		x	Y**	Every week
South Bend		x	Y	Every other week
Goshen		x	\$6*	Every other week
Warsaw		x	Y	Every other week
Evansville		x	Y	Every other week
Walkerton		x	Y	Every other week
Ft. Wayne		x	Y	Every other week
Mishawaka		x	Y	Every week

*Recycling is optional at additional cost through private hauler
**No cost: paid by taxes

The table below illustrates the trash and recycling fees associated with every community compared to the City of Valparaiso's current fee (red column). Please note that the City of Elkhart is not a fee service-based operation and subsidizes 100% of their trash and recycling operations through their general fund.



PRIVATIZATION

The City of Valparaiso solicited a high-level quotation from an independent contractor to provide trash and recycling services to the City. At that time, the quote was \$19.42 per month to a residential user as of April of 2021.

Once this information was received there was a discussion regarding the advantages and disadvantages of privatizing the operation. The committee determined the following:

1. The City should control their own level of service.
2. Only the City can control the impacts to waste reduction and recycling goals.
3. Privatization may negatively impact employment within the Public Works Division and reduce workforce flexibility.
4. Community pride and public perception may be negatively impacted.
5. Organizational values would change.
6. The ability of the Public Works Division to respond to technological, regulatory and socio-economic changes would be altered.

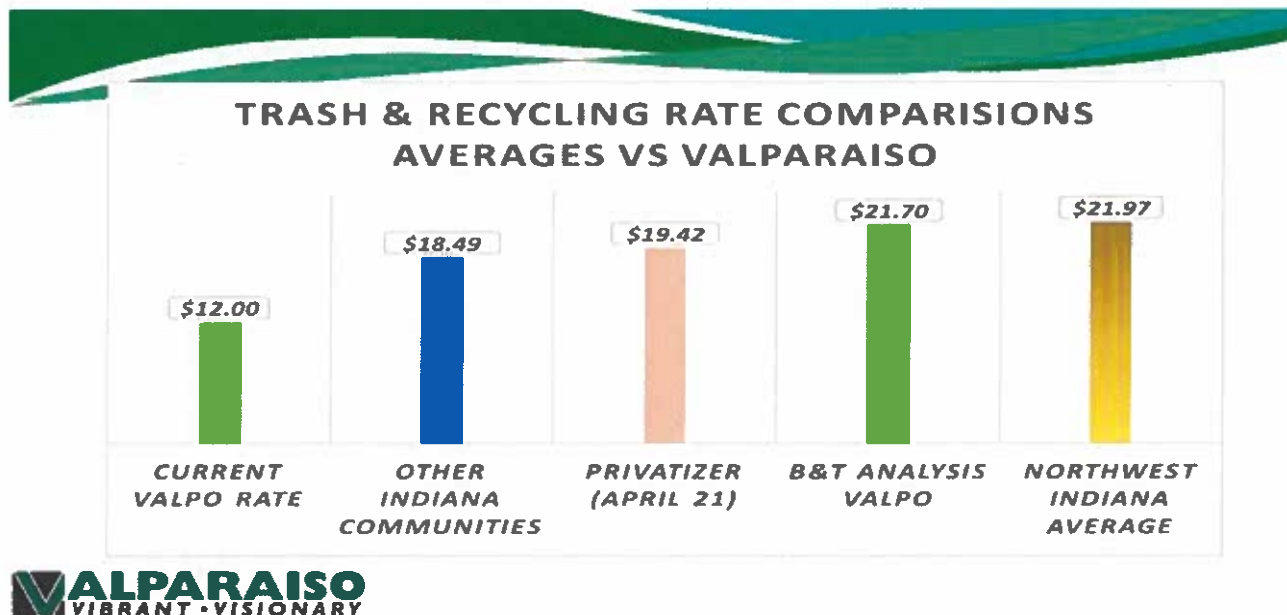
High Level Analysis
Completed in April of 2021
by Major Privatizer

Estimated Residential Fee to
Provide Trash and Recycling
Services to Valparaiso:

\$19.42 Per Month



Based on the budget as proposed by the privatizer, the Committee compared the City's current flat rate versus the other Indiana communities, the financial analysis by Baker Tilly, LLP of the current budgetary needs of the Public Works Division and communities located in Northwest Indiana. This comparison is shown in the following graph:



INTERNAL OPERATIONS AUDIT

As with any soundly managed business organization, the VCS will utilize the resources available to them to assure efficient operations without compromising customer service and the safety of our employees. Increasing rates to the public is a sensitive subject and should be thoughtfully built in a manner that is informative but also responsible to our stakeholders.

The VCS took the opportunity to hire a solid waste and recycling specialist that would provide an internal audit of the trash and recycling operations of the City of Valparaiso. This audit reviewed the Public Works Division's Solid Waste Department (SWD) staffing levels, use of equipment and capital investment. This independent review provided an overall assessment of the SWD, identified opportunities for improved efficiency and effectiveness in SWD operations and prioritizes the top efficiency improvement and cost savings opportunities for SWD's consideration. The work was prepared by Strategic1 Business Services at the direction and with the cooperation of the City's Public Works Division.

Opportunities for the VCS to reduce its costs in future years were identified. The primary findings and the "potential" cost impact are provided below. Total savings may change, depending on which combination or portion of the initiatives are selected. Additionally, estimated savings will erode year over year due to the increases in fuel, labor and capital costs.

PRIMARY FINDINGS	ESTIMATED COST SAVINGS
Switch to every other week recycling	\$230,000
Eliminate free recycling to businesses	\$50,000
Eliminate servicing carts in alleyways (avoid redundancy)	\$120,000

REFUSE AND RECYLCING ORDINANCE REVIEW

Chapter 53: Refuse and Recycling within the City of Valparaiso's *Code of Ordinances* provides the legal authority for the Public Works Division's solid waste and recycling operations in the City through a series of rules and regulations. This ordinance addresses, but is not limited to, a few of the following items:

1. Setting refuse/garbage collection fees.
2. Providing weekly curbside collection of all residential refuse, recyclables and yard waste within the corporate limits of the City of Valparaiso.
3. Placing rollout containers curbside for collection.
4. Recycling collection and containers.
5. Yard waste collection.
6. Placing all refuse and recyclables in containers supplied by the City of Valparaiso.
7. Penalties for violations of any provision of Chapter 53.

Suggested changes by the Committee to the current ordinance include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Requiring all premises, both business and residential to subscribe to a collection service.
2. Changing every week recycling collection to every-other-week.
3. Eliminating recycling for businesses.
4. Providing service for multi-units that are four (4) or less.
5. Eliminating service for private roads unless waiver of liability is provided and alleyway collection where feasible.
6. Define bulk items and how they will be charged and collected.
7. Limiting yard waste collection to reflect the following:
 - Brush cut in four (4) foot lengths, tied and bundled with branch diameter less than three (3) inches.
 - No loose piles.
8. Fees for additional trips along with amending the current rates and charges

CONCLUSIONS

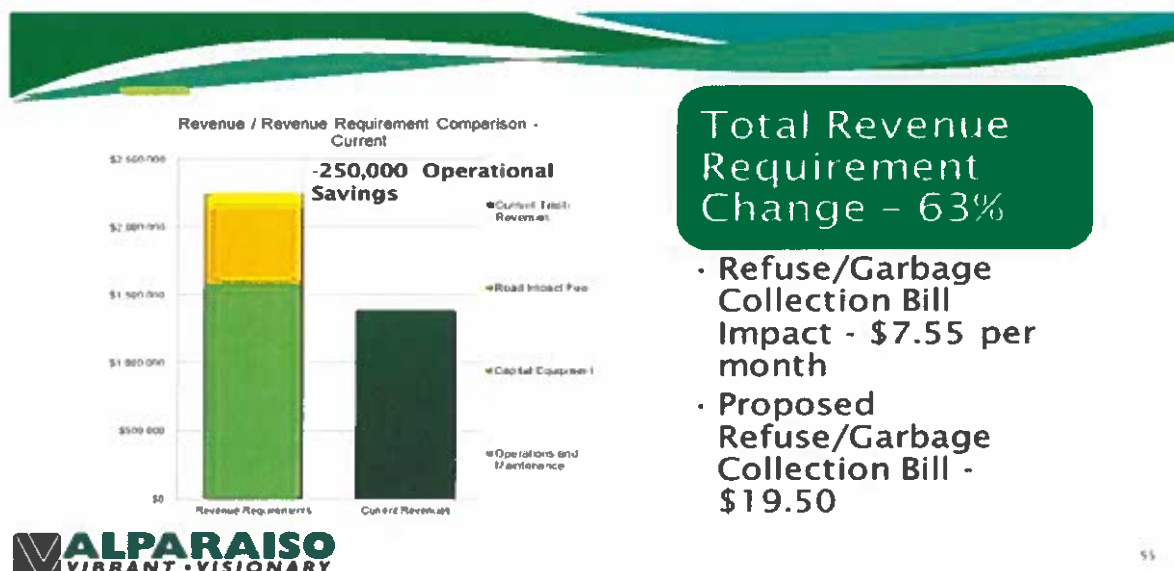
The VCS Public Works Division Trash and Recycling Committee met on three (3) separate occasions to study the presented information and provide a consensus moving forward for the community in achieving the City Administration's specified goal. The main takeaways from the Committee's work included the following:

1. The City of Valparaiso provides a high level of service to community's customers and is competitive in rates versus neighboring communities and the private market. This would include a proposed rate increase.
2. At this time, privatization is not the right choice for our community as it would negatively affect work force flexibility, employment and in controlling costs.
3. There is a need for a more robust Recycling Education Plan regardless of the recycling market conditions.
4. Per the internal audit, implement operational changes and look towards continuous improvement for operational costs savings in the future.
5. Modify the City of Valparaiso's current refuse and recycling ordinance to reflect operational changes that result in clearer rules, regulations and eliminate unnecessary operational costs.
6. An increase in rates is warranted based upon the Committee's findings.

FINAL RECOMMENATIONS

The initial charge of the committee was to recommend a new refuse and recycling fee that is reasonable for the community in order to sustain the solid waste collection and disposal activities and services provided by the VCS Public Works Division. After the Committee's strategic review of this matter, the Committee is recommending the following actions:

1. An increase of the residential customer solid waste collection and disposal rate from a flat rate of \$12.00/month to \$19.50/month which accounts for an estimated savings of \$250,000 in operational costs as shown below. In addition, this rate increase is about at the midpoint of the current rates of Indiana communities examined by the Committee.



2. Institute major operational recommendations presented by Strategic1 Business Services, LLC which includes switching to every other week for recycling collection services, eliminating recycling services to businesses, eliminating servicing carts in alleys and changing rear load refuse and recycling routes to automated routes.
3. Revise Chapter 53: Refuse and Recycling within the City of Valparaiso's *Code of Ordinances*.

REFERENCES

1. *Valparaiso Solid Waste and Recycling Financial Analysis*, Baker Tilly, LLP, 2021.
2. *City of Valparaiso Solid Waste Department Collection Efficiency Review*, Strategic Business Services, LLC, November, 18, 2021.
3. Chapter 53: Refuse and Recycling within the City of Valparaiso's *Code of Ordinances*, as last amended in 2012.
4. *Agendas/Presentations*, Valparaiso City Utilities, Public Works Division, Trash and Recycling Committee, meeting dates on December 17, 2021, February 7, 2022 and February 28, 2022.

Valparaiso City Services Public Works Division Trash and Recycling Committee



Pictured Left to Right: Keri Baron Director of Porter County Recycling & Waste Reduction; Alina Hahn Chief Financial Officer Valparaiso City Services; Brent Dickson Assistant Public Works Director; Councilman Kasey Schmidt; Councilman George Douglass; City Administrator Mike Jessen, Brian Dishman Public Works Operations Supervisor; Nate McGinley Utilities Project Management Director; Steve Poulos Executive Director Valparaiso City Services.

CHAPTER 53: REFUSE AND RECYCLING

Section

General Provisions

- 53.01 Definitions
- 53.02 Rules and regulations
- 53.03 Administration
- 53.04 Enforcement
- 53.05 Refuse/garbage collection fee

Scope of Work

- 53.10 General description
- 53.11 Hours of operation
- 53.12 Recyclable materials
- 53.13 Recycling containers
- 53.14 Yard waste
- 53.15 Automated collection system
- 53.16 Refuse originating outside of the city
- 53.17 Units collected
- 53.18 Depositing on public streets or sidewalks
- 53.19 Accumulation on private premises; disposal unit
- 53.20 Construction debris
- 53.21 Bulk items
- 53.22 Abandoned or unattended appliances
- 53.23 Dumpsters
- 53.24 Contractors

Solid Waste Management

- 53.35 Fees and revenues
- 53.36 Extra services
- 53.99 Penalty

GENERAL PROVISIONS

§ 53.01 DEFINITIONS.

For the purpose of this Chapter, the following definitions shall apply unless the context clearly indicates or requires a different meaning.

APARTMENT COMPLEX. A single residential structure with more than four (4) separate living units or multiple adjacent structures that are part of a larger residential complex or grouping with a combined total of more than four (4) separate living units. Although not solely determinative, common ownership of multiple adjacent residential structures that contain more than four (4) separate living units shall be indicative of an Apartment Complex.

BULK ITEMS. All appliances, furniture, mattresses, children's play equipment and/or solid waste material with a weight or volume greater than that allowed by a disposal unit.

CITY. The City of Valparaiso, Porter County, Indiana.

CONTRACTORS. Any paid business or individual, or any business or individual that as part of their craft or employment performs work on any property located within the City.

CONSTRUCTION WASTE. At a minimum, construction waste is lumber, windows, glass, doors, concrete, pavers, tile, drywall, landscape refuse, rubber mulch, grout, tarps, pallets, compounds, drywall mud, shingles, gutters, asphalt, cement blocks, duct work, water heaters, wiring, furnaces, plastic piping, copper piping, sewer piping, flooring, particle board, ceramic tile, vinyl

flooring, hardwood flooring, joists, trusses, radiators, steel piping, cabinetry, laminate and Formica counter tops, rubber boots (sleeves for piping), bricks, clay tiles, rubber roofing material, tar and asphalt, gravel, paneling, plumbing fixtures, treated lumber, deck material, fencing, swimming pools, cellulose ceiling tiles, insulation, chain link fence, tin ceiling, rebar, wire mesh, light fixtures, all siding, sheeting, window treatments and carpets.

CURBSIDE. Within three (3) feet immediately adjacent to street pavement or alley pavement and gutter.

CUSTOMER.

- (1) **RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER** is any person residing in the City's corporate limits provided that the resident is not residing in any structure with more than four (4) separate living units or within an Apartment Complex. A **RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER** shall receive full garbage and recycling services from the City's Public Works Division as defined in this Chapter.
- (2) A **BUSINESS CUSTOMER** is an owner of a: i) commercial or industrial structure; ii) Apartment Complex, or iii) structure that contains an institutional or non-profit organization, which produces any type of garbage and/or recycling as defined in this Chapter and has entered into a contract for garbage and/or recycling services with the City as defined in this Chapter.

DISPOSAL UNIT. The wheeled container(s) selected and approved by the Board of Public Works and Safety for the purpose of disposing of refuse.

DUMPSTERS. Any container larger than 96 gallons used for the collection of any and all types of refuse.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. The Executive Director of the Public Works Division, Valparaiso City Services, City of Valparaiso, Indiana or his or her authorized deputy, agent or representative.

HAZARDOUS WASTES. Wastes defined and designated as hazardous by the USEPA, IDEM and/or the Porter County Health Department.

HOUSEHOLD CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION DEBRIS. Waste materials from do it yourselfers and/or a contractor, interior and exterior household construction, remodeling and repair projects, including, but not limited to, concrete, drywall, plywood and paneling pieces, lumber and other building materials; windows and doors; cabinets; carpeting; tile; disassembled bathroom and kitchen fixtures.

IDEM. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management.

MAY. The action referred to is permissive.

MEDICAL WASTES. Isolation wastes, infectious agents, blood products, sharps, body parts, contaminated bedding, surgical wastes, potentially contaminated laboratory wastes and/or unused medications.

REFUSE.

- (1) The terms **GARBAGE**, **REFUSE**, **RUBBISH**, **SOLID WASTE**, **TRASH** and **WASTE** shall be identical in meaning, unless more specifically defined in this Chapter.
- (2) All discarded and unwanted household and kitchen wastes, including, but not limited to, food, food residues, and materials necessarily used for packaging, storing, preparing, and consuming food items that are normally defined as garbage, and all waste materials resulting from the usual routine or domestic housekeeping, including, but not limited to, aluminum and steel cans; glass containers; plastic containers; crockery and other containers; metal; paper of all types, including newspapers, books, magazines and catalogs; boxes and cartons; cold ashes; furnishings and fixtures; textiles and leather; toys and recreational equipment; and similar items.
- (3) All non-spoilable solid and semisolid wastes, including bulky refuse, except for the following items:
 - a) Liquids;
 - b) Liquid or water carried wastes which are normally disposed of in sanitary sewer systems;
 - c) Human waste, except for disposable diapers;
 - d) Hazardous wastes;
 - e) Medical wastes; and
 - f) Large animal and farm animal waste.

RECYCLABLES or RECYCLABLE MATERIAL(S).

- (1) The following materials are ACCEPTABLE for recycling:
 - a) Empty and clean plastic containers, bottles, tubs or jugs with the recycle triangle number of 1-5,7;

- b) Paper products such as newsprint, corrugated cardboard, chip board, magazines, catalogues and mixed paper;
 - c) Empty and clean aluminum, tin, bimetal and steel cans; and
 - d) Clean glass.
- (2) The following materials are **NOT ACCEPTABLE** for recycling and include, but are not limited to, aerosol cans; latex or oil-based paint cans; oil containers; Styrofoam; trash; plastic beverage rings and containers; hazardous waste and medical waste containers; construction wastes and demolition debris; and yard wastes.

SHALL. The action referred to is mandatory.

USEPA. The United States Environmental Protection Agency.

YARD WASTE. Leaves, limbs, sticks, and other vegetative matter, plants or trees and grass clippings.

(‘89 Code, § 70.01) (Am. Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05; Am. Ord. 21-2012, passed 8-27-12)

§ 53.02 RULES AND REGULATIONS.

The City’s Board of Public Works and Safety shall promulgate such rules, regulations as may be necessary to effectuate the operation and intent of this Chapter.

§ 53.03 ADMINISTRATION.

The Executive Director of the Public Works Division, Valparaiso City Services, shall be responsible for the administration and carrying into effect the provisions of this Chapter.

§ 53.04 ENFORCEMENT.

The authority for enforcing any and all provisions of this Chapter shall be the City’s Board of Public Works and Safety, the Executive Director and/or his or her designee and the City’s Code Enforcement Department.

§ 53.05 REFUSE/GARBAGE COLLECTION FEE.

- (A) A refuse/garbage collection fee shall be assessed against each Residential Customer and Business Customer.
- (B) Refuse/garbage will not be picked up from and no fee will be charged to the following property unless the owner elects to enter into a contract for refuse/garbage collection service with the Public Works Division:
 - (1) Apartment Complex
 - (2) Business properties
- (C) Once per week refuse/garbage collection services may be offered to business properties. Business customers are required to enter into a contract for refuse/garbage collection services either with a private trash hauler or with the City. The owner must request such service from the Public Works Division and must generate no more refuse/garbage than can be contained in three (3) disposal units. The Board of Public Works and Safety may implement rules and regulations concerning the collection of refuse/garbage from business properties.
- (D) The Public Works Division does not provide refuse/garbage collection services to properties located on private roads.
- (E) A refuse/garbage collection fee is hereby established as follows:
 - (1) For residential refuse/garbage collection, a flat rate amount of \$19.50 per month per disposal unit served.
 - (2) Residential refuse/garbage collection customers qualifying as low-income residents shall be assessed a reduced flat rate fee of \$9.75 per month. To qualify as a low-income resident, a resident must have an income level no greater than 150% of the federally established poverty guidelines. Residents may qualify for the reduced monthly fee by applying for the reduction through the Public Works Division.
 - (3) Additional disposal units will be charged at an additional \$14.65 per month per disposal unit.
 - (4) For the collection of business customer refuse/garbage, a flat fee of \$24.40 per month for each disposal unit up to the maximum of three (3) disposal units per business customer.
 - (5) If a customer requires a return trip by the Public Works Division for the collection of refuse/garbage through no fault of the City, a flat fee of \$45.00 per trip will be charged to the customer.
- (F) The refuse/garbage collection fee shall be billed and collected by the Valparaiso City Services in conjunction with sanitary sewer and water billing. All refuse/garbage collection fees shall be due upon billing by the Valparaiso City Services and if not paid within 30 days, shall be subject to a penalty of 10%. Should nonpayment exceed 30 days, the Valparaiso City Services may assess a \$25

penalty and initiate collection activities. All collection costs incurred by Valparaiso City Services, including reasonable court costs, collection expenses and legal fees, shall be reimbursed by the customer.

- (G) The fees collected pursuant to this section shall be deposited by the City Clerk-Treasurer into the General Fund of the City. An amount within the City's General Fund equivalent to the revenue(s) generated by the net fees collected pursuant to this section shall be allocated solely and exclusively used and appropriated for road maintenance and repair and sidewalk and pathway installation, maintenance, and repair.
- (H) The new refuse/garbage collection fee established by this section shall be in force and effect as of the bills dated October 5, 2022 and October 25, 2022. All prior refuse/garbage collection fees established shall remain in full force and effect until the beginning of the consumption period for the billing date.

(Ord. 22-2005, passed 5-9-05; Am. Ord. 26-2005, passed 5-9-05; Am. Ord. 21-2012, passed 8-27-12)

SCOPE OF WORK

§ 53.10 GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

- (A) The Public Works Division provides weekly curbside collection and disposal-processing services of all residential and business customer refuse as defined herein.
- (B) The Public Works Division provides bi-weekly curbside collection and disposal-processing services of all residential customer recyclables and yard waste collection as defined herein and approved.
- (C) The Public Works Division does not provide collection and disposal-processing services for Business Customer recyclables and yard waste as defined herein.
- (D) Any changes to the boundaries or service area as the result of events including, but not limited to, annexation; zoning actions; site plan approvals; or construction, shall be communicated to and approved by the Board of Public Works and Safety and/or the City's Common Council.
- (E) All collection points receiving the aforementioned services shall be required to prepare all materials for collection and/or disposal into proper disposal units. The Public Works Division will collect only properly prepared disposal units. Customers will be provided one (1) disposal unit. Additional disposal units may be provided for an additional fee as described in this Chapter.

(Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05; Am. Ord. 21-2012, passed 8-27-12)

§ 53.11 HOURS OF OPERATION.

- (A) The workday for the Public Works Division commences at 7:00 a.m.
- (C) On official holidays no services will be provided. Official holidays are established by the Board of Public Works and Safety. Services will be provided either on the working day previous or immediately following the holiday, as determined by the Executive Director.
- (D) Official holidays are:
 - (1) New Year's Day;
 - (2) Memorial Day;
 - (3) Independence Day;
 - (4) Labor Day;
 - (5) Thanksgiving Day; and
 - (6) Christmas Day.

(Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05)

§ 53.12 RECYCLABLE MATERIALS.

- (A) Recyclable materials, as defined herein, that are set out for collection shall be collected and marketed by the City. Residential customers may place amounts of accepted recyclable materials in a large yellow lid wheeled disposal unit with a weight or volume no greater than that allowed for by the disposal unit. One (1) disposal unit will be provided per recyclable collection point. A request for additional disposal units will be charged \$14.65 per month per requested unit up to the maximum of three (3) disposal units per residential customers. Plastic bags are never accepted for curbside pick-up. Disposal units are the property of the City.
- (B) When recyclable materials (including but not limited to; appliances, scrap metal, aluminum/tin cans, and the like) are placed at curbside, they become the property of the City and no person/persons other than City employees/authorized City representatives or

the residential user may remove such materials, except as otherwise provided by the Board of Public Works and Safety. Recyclable materials and containers may not be left at the curbside collection point, or any point on the street for more than a 24-hour period.

(Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05; Am. Ord. 21-2012, passed 8-27-12) Penalty, see § 53.99

§ 53.13 RECYCLING DISPOSAL UNITS

- (A) **The Public Works Division shall provide to each residential customer collection point a disposal unit to be used for the collection of recyclables. An additional recycling disposal unit may be provided at a charge of \$14.65 per month per requested unit up to the maximum of three (3) disposal units per residential customer.**
- (B) The Executive Director shall have the authority to identify additional recyclable articles under the solid waste management program.
- (C) Recycling disposal units, as provided by the Public Works Division, shall remain the property of the City.
- (D) Recycling disposal units shall remain with the dwelling unit even upon changes of customers or transfer of ownership.
- (E) Recycling disposal units must be placed within five (5) feet of the collection point by 7:00 a.m. on the scheduled refuse collection day and returned to storage by 7:00 p.m. on that day.
- (F) Recycling disposal units may not be at the curbside collection point, or any point, on the street for more than a 24-hour period.

(Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05; Am. Ord. 21-2012, passed 8-27-12) Penalty, see § 53.99

§ 53.14 YARD WASTE.

- (A) Yard waste shall be collected throughout the City in a timely fashion and on a schedule established by the Executive Director.
- (B) **Brush, tree limbs and/or branches must be cut to no more than four (4) feet in length and no more than three (3) inches in diameter. The cut brush, tree branches and/or limbs must be bundled with string or twine and each bundle cannot exceed 50 pounds in weight.**

(Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05; Am. Ord. 21-2012, passed 8-27-12)

§ 53.15 AUTOMATED COLLECTION SYSTEM.

- (A) Disposal units are the property of the City. If a disposal unit is damaged through normal use it will be replaced and/or repaired at no cost. If the disposal unit is damaged by fire, chemicals, vehicles or other abnormal reasons, lost or stolen the full replacement cost of the disposal unit may be charged to the customer requesting service.
- (B) As property of the City, the disposal units are to remain at the customer's property and must not be removed.
- (C) Customers must use the disposal unit as provided by the City for disposing of residential, retail, commercial and/or office refuse.
- (D) Customers are responsible for cleaning the disposal unit.
- (E) All refuse must be placed in the disposal unit.
- (F) Disposal units must be placed within five (5) feet of the curbside collection point by 7:00 a.m. on the scheduled refuse collection day.
- (G) Disposal units may not remain at the collection point, in front of a building or residence for any period longer than 24-hours after the scheduled refuse collection day.
- (H) Disposal units must be at least three (3) feet from any obstruction (telephone poles, mail boxes, cars, and the like).
- (I) Disposal unit lids must be closed.
- (J) If the Executive Director determines the need of a second container, one (1) will be provided at the charge described in this Chapter. If a customer has two (2) containers, they must be placed at least three (3) feet apart.
- (K) For pick-up of large bulk items and household construction and demolition debris that will not fit into the disposal unit, the Public Works Division must be notified 48 hours prior to regular refuse collection to schedule an additional pick-up. **A trip charge of \$10.00 for each scheduled additional pick-up and a \$15.00 fee per cubic yard of refuse in excess of a disposal unit will be assessed to the customer.**

(Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05; Am. Ord. 21-2012, passed 8-27-12) Penalty, see § 53.99

§ 53.16 REFUSE ORIGINATING OUTSIDE OF THE CITY.

No person(s) shall dump refuse, yard wastes or other unwholesome items generated outside of the City's corporate limits either anywhere within the City or for collection and disposal-processing services by the Public Works Division unless authorized by the Board of Public Works and Safety and/or the Executive Director. At the discretion of the Board of Works and Public Safety, a minimum of \$500.00 fine per occurrence per day or not more than the maximum fine allowed under state law per violation shall be assessed onto any person(s) who willfully or negligently violates any provision of this Section.

(Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05) Penalty, see § 53.99

§ 53.17 DISPOSAL UNITS COLLECTED.

Collection shall be the disposal units provided by the City and assigned to the customer only. No other containers will be picked up, including refuse outside or on top of the unit. Additional units are available upon request and at the monthly rate as established by the Board of Public Works and Safety and the City's Common Council.

(Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05; Am. Ord. 21-2012, passed 8-27-12)

§ 53.18 DEPOSITING ON PUBLIC STREETS OR SIDEWALKS.

It shall be unlawful for any person or firm to throw, put, or place any trash, yard waste, garbage, and other unwholesome and/or waste materials into and upon any of the streets, alleys, gutters, storm sewers, ditches or sidewalks in the City.

(Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05) Penalty, see § 53.99

§ 53.19 ACCUMULATION ON PRIVATE PREMISES; DISPOSAL UNITS.

- (A) All persons having, making, or accumulating trash, yard waste, or other unwholesome and waste materials, shall keep the same in disposal units provided by the City and shall place the disposal units at the designated location for weekly collection.
- (B) It shall be unlawful to set any container larger than a City disposal unit curbside, excepting that a dumpster shall be allowed for apartment complexes, commercial, retail and office complexes when the City disposal unit(s) is/are not acceptable in size and/or cost or as otherwise approved by the Executive Director.
- (C) **Dumpsters are permitted for construction debris and large volume waste. Dumpsters may not be placed on City streets, sidewalks or rights-of-way without written permission from the Executive Director.**

(Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05; Am. Ord. 21-2012, passed 8-27-12) Penalty, see § 53.99

§ 53.20 CONSTRUCTION DEBRIS.

- (A) Household construction and demolition debris not to exceed three (3) cubic yards may be placed in suitable containers that are in good condition, have secure handles for lifting, are water tight sufficient to keep out rain water, do not exceed 30 gallons and/or 30 pounds or in bundles not exceeding two (2) feet in diameter by four (4) feet in length. The Executive Director or designee may determine that the amount of construction and/or demolition debris is too much for the City to pick up and may require a private hauler be used to remove the debris. A fee, as established by the Board of Public Works and Safety, is charged for the collection of construction debris and may be paid at the Public Works Division.
- (B) Construction and demolition debris may not be at the curbside collection point or any point on the street for more than a 24-hour period.

(Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05; Am. Ord. 21-2012, passed 8-27-12) Penalty, see § 53.99

§ 53.21 BULK ITEMS.

Bulk items will be picked up on the designated collection day and at the designated location. Bulk items pick-up must be requested either by telephone or e-mail at least 24-hours prior to the collection day.

(Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05)

§ 53.22 ABANDONED OR UNATTENDED APPLIANCES.

- (A) Abandoning or leaving freezers, refrigerators, iceboxes, ice chests, and other major appliances is subject to the regulations as set forth in this Chapter. The provisions of this Chapter shall apply to any freezers, refrigerators, iceboxes, ice chest, dryer, washer, or any other major appliances having a capacity of one and one-half (1 ½) cubic feet or more.
- (B) No person, firm, corporation, or organization shall abandon any refrigerator, freezer, icebox, ice chest, or other appliance anyplace within the City.
- (C) No person shall leave any refrigerator, freezer, icebox, ice chest, or other appliance any place out-of-doors without the doors removed.

- (D) The purpose of this Chapter is to prevent individuals from being trapped in a refrigerator, freezer, icebox, ice chest, or other major appliance.
- (E) Any person, firm, corporation, or organization that shall desire to have a refrigerator, freezer, icebox, ice chest, or other major appliance removed must:
 - (1) Request a pick-up from the Public Works Division at least 24-hours prior to collection day;
 - (2) Remove the door(s); and
 - (3) Place the refrigerator, freezer, icebox, ice chest, or other major appliance within three (3) feet of the curbside.
- (F) Appliances will only be picked up on regular trash collection day.
- (G) Appliances may not be left at the curbside collection point, or any point on the street for more than a 24-hour period.
- (H) **At the discretion of the Board of Works and Public Safety, any person(s) who willfully or negligently violates any provision of this Section shall be assessed a \$500.00 minimum fine per occurrence per day or not more than the maximum fine allowed under state law per violation.**

(Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05; Am. Ord. 21-2012, passed 8-27-12) Penalty, see § 53.99

§ 53.23 DUMPSTERS.

Any person who desires to place a dumpster on public property must obtain a permit from the Public Works Division. The permit will be issued based on the following criteria:

- (A) Prior to the locating of any dumpster on or in a public street or alley in the City, all refuse companies must obtain a permit from the Executive Director. Permits shall be issued for a maximum period of ten (10) days and are renewable for additional periods of ten (10) days at the discretion of the Executive Director. Dumpsters may not be placed within 50 feet of an intersection or in such a manner and fashion so as to cause traffic safety problems by unreasonably blocking the normal flow and pattern of traffic. No dumpster may be placed so as to block a public sidewalk.
- (B) The refuse company shall provide barricades and/or traffic control devices meeting the minimum criteria contained in the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways* in the State of Indiana. Refuse companies shall be responsible for installing and maintaining the required barricades and/or traffic control devices.
- (C) The refuse company shall sign a liability statement assuming all risks associated with the placement of the dumpster in any public street or alley and shall provide to the Executive Director proof of liability insurance which shall name the City as a co-insured with liability limits determined by the Executive Director.
- (D) Failure to follow any of these policies shall be reason for denial or revocation of a permit and a pattern or practice of violating these regulations shall be grounds for denial of future permits to a refuse company.
- (E) A refuse company may appeal any decision of the Executive Director concerning these regulations to the Board of Public Works and Safety.

(Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05; Am. Ord. 21-2012, passed 8-27-12) Penalty, see § 53.99

§ 53.24 CONTRACTORS.

The City will not clean up or pick up any form of yard waste, construction and demolition debris or refuse left on a property by a contractor or their agent.

(Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05) Penalty, see § 53.99

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

§ 53.35 FEES AND REVENUES.

- (A) **The Board of Public Works and Safety shall charge a fee in support of the City's Solid Waste Management & Recycling Program. The fees shall be reasonable and periodically reviewed in order to sustain the solid waste collection and disposal activities and services provided by the Public Works Division.**
- (B) Fees will be charged for the following items:
 - (1) Refuse in excess of the provided disposal unit;

- (2) Monthly refuse collection; and
 - (3) Disposal units – replacement for abnormal use.
- (C) Fees will be charged for the bi-weekly curbside collection and disposal-processing services for residential customer recyclables.
- (D) The solid waste management fee shall be payable monthly and shall be billed, whenever practical to do so, with the *Valparaiso City Services Utility Bill* associated with charges for water, wastewater, stormwater and other services.
- (E) The solid waste management fee imposed under this Chapter may be temporarily waived for the period of time, as is concurrent with the period of the temporary cessation of water service. The temporary waiver for fees imposed under this chapter will cease upon resumption of water services.
- (F) The solid waste management fees imposed under this Chapter may only be refunded for the period of time that is concurrent with the period of the temporary cessation of service, owing to extended absence for the residential customers. In order to determine the length of time for which a refund may be made, the following apply:
- (1) No refund will be given for any month in which there is evidence of more than minimum water consumption; and
 - (2) No refund will be given without reasonable documentation of actual absence, which may include but not be limited to out-of-state utility bills, active bank accounts and the like.
- (G) The solid waste management fee and other fees shall be approved by the Board of Public Works and Safety, and charged according to the published schedule and shall remain in effect as indicated until the time as they may be modified or rescinded by passage and adoption of an ordinance, pursuant to the terms of Indiana law.

(H) **Fees.**

VALPARAISO REFUSE AND RECYCLING FEE SCHEDULE		
	Current Rate	New Rate
Standard Monthly Fees		
Residential - Refuse + Recycling	\$12.00	\$19.50
Residential - Low Income Qualified	\$8.00	\$9.75
Additional Refuse and/or Recycling Units	\$9.00 per unit per mo.	\$14.65 per unit per mo.
Business Patron Refuse	\$15.00	\$24.40
Miscellaneous Fees		
Return Trip Fee		\$45.00
Large Bulk/Household Construction Items		\$15 per cu. Yd. + \$10 pick-up fee
Illegal Dumping *		\$500 per occurrence per day *
Disposal Unit Replacement		Actual cost of container
* At the discretion of the Valparaiso Board of Works and Public Safety. A minimum fine of \$500 up to the maximum as allowable by State Law.		

- (I) **The Board of Public Works and Safety sets the cost for mulch sales and disposal.**
 - (J) Residential customers choosing to not use the City's solid waste management service are still required to pay the monthly fee.
 - (K) Apartment Complex, offices, retail, restaurants, commercial, and similar types of businesses are not required to use the solid waste management service, but may do so through a contract with the City.
 - (L) Revenues from fees and charges collected under this Chapter shall be deposited into the City's General Fund and shall be used exclusively for the purchase of equipment, supplies, transfer station fees and other expenses as directly related to the cost of collecting, handling, transporting and disposing of refuse and recyclables by the City's Public Works Division.
- (Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05; Am. Ord. 21-2012, passed 8-27-12) Penalty, see § 53.99

§ 53.36 EXTRA SERVICES.

The Executive Director may designate "clean up days" in which extra trash, **bulk item pick-up** and/or recycling services are provided by the Public Works Division. Dates, times, rules, and guidelines may be established and promoted by the Public Works Division. Extra services may be provided for neighborhood cleanup, roadside cleanup, community festivals and events.

(Ord. 21-2012, passed 8-27-12)

§ 53.99 PENALTY.

Violations of any provisions of this Chapter are subject to a \$500.00 fine per occurrence per day and are administered through the City's Ordinance Violations Bureau.

(Ord. 21-2005, passed 4-25-05; Am. Ord. 21-2012, passed 8-27-12)



Porter County
RECYCLING
& WASTE REDUCTION

219-465-3694
info@PorterCountyRecycling.org
www.PorterCountyRecycling.org



@recycleportercounty

2025 Calendar **CONFIRMED 1-30-25**

Household Hazardous Waste Collections (HHW) (may be subject to change)			
EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Household Hazardous Waste + Tire Collection*	Saturday, May 3	9am - 2pm	Porter County Expo 215 E Division Road, Valparaiso Enter at Gate 3
Household Hazardous Waste + Secure Shredding*	Saturday, June 7	9am - 2pm	Portage High School 6451 US-6, Portage Enter at Pan Am Boulevard
Household Hazardous Waste	Saturday, June 21	9am - 2pm	Chesterton High School 2125 S 11th St, Chesterton Enter at 11th Street
Household Hazardous Waste	Saturday, July 19	9am - 2pm	Boone Grove High School 260 S 500 W, Boone Grove Enter at 11th Street
Household Hazardous Waste + Secure Shredding*	Saturday, Aug 9	9am - 2pm	Neighbors' Educational Opportunities 5201 US-6, Portage Enter at Wilshire Drive
Household Hazardous Waste	Thursday, Sept 4	9am - 2pm	Porter County Expo 215 E Division Road, Valparaiso Enter at Gate 3
Household Hazardous Waste + Tire Collection*	Saturday, Oct 11	9am - 2pm	Porter County Expo 215 E Division Road, Valparaiso Enter at Gate 3

*Restrictions and/or fees may apply to these events. Contact District office for complete event details.

Public Compost Site Hours			
SITE	DATE	HOURS	HOLIDAY CLOSURES
Valparaiso Compost Site 2150 W. Lincolnway Valparaiso, IN	Regular Season Mar 17 - Nov 1, 2025 *weather permitting* Winter Season Nov 3 - Mar 14, 2026	Mon - Sat 8am - 5pm Mon - Sat 8am - 4pm	May 26, July 4, Sept 1, Nov 27, Dec 25
Boone Grove Compost Site 546 S. 400 W. Valparaiso, IN	Regular Season Mar 17 - Dec 6, 2025	Mon - Sat 8am - 4pm	May 26, July 4, Sept 1, Nov 27-30
Portage Compost Site 6451 U.S. Highway 12 Portage, IN	Regular Season Mar 17 - Dec 6, 2025	Mon - Sat 8am - 4pm	May 26, July 4, Sept 1, Nov 27-30
Hours/Dates subject to change - Please visit portercountyrecycling.org			

Energy Sustainability Policy

Introduction

Publicly owned clean water agencies continue to be challenged to meet the needs of growing populations and must be prepared to serve the nation's growing population into the future. According to the United States Census Bureau, the nation's population grew by 39 million from 1995 to 2007 which is an increase of 1.2 percent per year. Clean water utility service populations have mirrored United States population trends growing at 1.3 percent per year. With growing service populations comes additional capital, operation and maintenance costs as plant capacities are increased and utilities are extended.¹

Despite the demands and cost pressures that Utilities face, clean water agencies continue to improve their efforts to protect human health and the environment through improved treatment performance, expansion of utility services and green initiatives, most notably energy efficiency enhancements that are sustainable. Utilities also must consider the long-term drivers, including efforts to increase service levels, aging infrastructure and new regulatory requirements.

Since 2002, the City of Valparaiso has invested over \$180 million into their water and wastewater utilities in order to improve the performance of their treatment plants through upgrades and expansions with a focus on energy efficiency and cost reduction in daily operations. As the City Valparaiso's aging infrastructure, increased regulatory requirements and population growth continues to fuel increasing capital needs, Valparaiso City Utilities (VCU) will strive to achieve energy cost reductions and environmental benefits through a variety of energy saving techniques.

Bearing all these factors in mind, and recognizing the need for energy savings and sustainability, Valparaiso City Utilities partnered with USEPA Region 5 (EPA), the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and other Indiana communities in an *Energy Management Pilot Project*. This two (2) year project started in October of 2008 and resulted in VCU being knowledgeable about their energy management activities. This project further resulted in VCU developing energy policies with long term plans in place. These plans are to improve energy and environmental performance of our water and wastewater utilities.

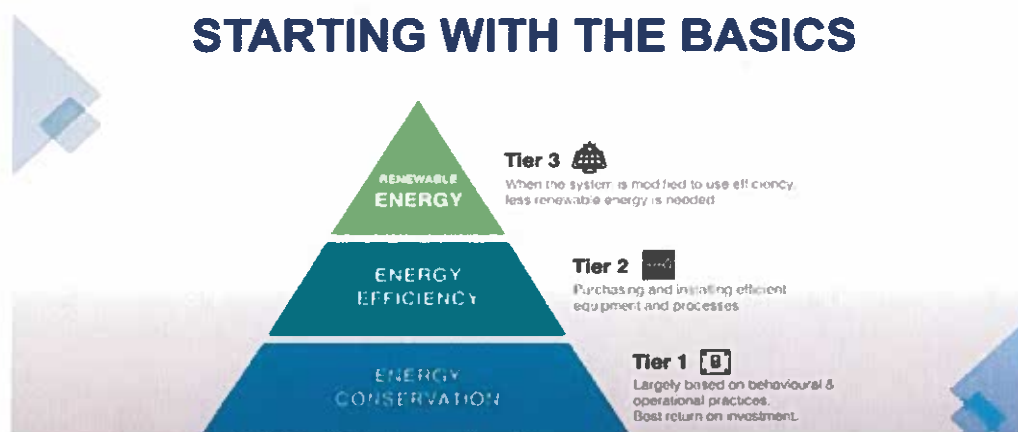
Purpose

The following document provides the VCU's statement of commitment to improving the use and management of energy resources by identifying activities and operations that consume energy, prioritizing operations and potential energy improvement efforts. In addition, this commitment includes developing action plans to implement energy improvements and sustainability at all of our facilities.

¹ Highlighting Challenges in Utility Financing and Management – 2008 NACWA Financial Survey Summary (paraphrased)

The Basics

VCU will promote responsible energy management practices within its daily operations to support fiscal responsibility, conserve natural resources and to reduce greenhouse gases. VCU will identify major activities and operations that consume energy, prioritize operations, explore potential energy improvement efforts and develop subsequent action plans to implement energy improvements while making utility wide operations compliant and more sustainable. The graph below shows the three (3) tiers of energy conservation and management strategies that have been utilized by VCU in the last 20 years.



Energy Conservation History at VCU

Through multiple plant upgrade/expansions supported by bond issues, VCU has addressed energy conservation and cost reduction methods. The impact of energy savings techniques can and has proven to be significant to the VCU. Proven, cost-effective technologies have and will continue to be used to conserve electrical energy.

At the treatment facilities energy management systems via Supervisory Control & Data Acquisition (SCADA) were installed to monitor and modify energy usage when necessary. VCU will encourage investigation of maximizing usage of electrical energy and minimizing peak demands while meeting treatment objectives. Energy efficient equipment such as National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) premium efficiency motors, variable frequency drives, fine pore bubble diffusers, high efficiency blowers, high efficiency lighting (LED), building management systems, and lighting controls have been studied and are currently utilized. As renewable energy sources become available these systems will be evaluated for cost effectiveness and durability and included in future energy management implementation.

Per the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) – 2008 *Financial Survey*, the table below illustrates the percentage of Utilities that have completed or have planned energy conservation or reduction methods. The table also summarizes the energy conservation or reduction methods that VCU has completed or is planning.

**National Association of Clean Water Agencies
2008 Financial Survey**

Energy Conservation or Cost Reduction Method	Percent of Agencies that have Completed Projects	Percent of Agencies that have Planned Projects	Valparaiso City Utilities Completed Projects
Installation of High Efficiency Pumps, Motors and Variable Frequency Drives (VFD)	71%	28%	Yes Water and Wastewater
SCADA Systems to Monitor and Optimize Energy Needs	68%	24%	Yes Water and Wastewater
Reduction of Inflow/Infiltration to Wastewater Treatment Plants	53%	26%	Yes Wastewater
Plants Process Modifications to reduce Energy Use	43%	34%	Yes Water and Wastewater
Use of Efficient Lighting and HVAC for Facility Administration Buildings	60%	25%	Yes Water and Wastewater
Electricity Generation by Biogas Fueled Engines	35%	24%	No Studied at Wastewater

The Appendices to this policy provide baseline monitoring data used in our ongoing evaluations, renewable energy efforts and a current summary of our energy improvements for the Wastewater Division from 2002 to the present and the Water Division from 2009 to the present.

Future Energy Conservation Strategies

The VCU will optimize the operation of its facilities to conserve energy by continuing to implement strategies to properly manage pumping rates at well fields, high service pumps at water treatment facilities, offsetting natural gas costs through methane production within the wastewater anaerobic digestion process and optimization of the wastewater activated sludge process to reduce aeration rates and sludge yields.

VCU will continue to promote the use of fuel efficient and/or alternate fuel vehicles and participate in the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement program which provided a flexible funding source for State and local governments to support transportation projects and programs that help improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion.

Facility Managers will be responsible for the implementation of the VCU's Energy Sustainability Policy at their facilities. VCU management will be responsible for the implementation of the policy in capital improvement projects. The VCU will further instruct consulting engineers to include application of sound energy management guidelines to all capital projects to reduce energy consumption in buildings and treatment processes.

Appropriate training will be provided for the managers and staff employees responsible for the energy conservation duties to maximize energy reduction opportunities. Measurable criteria have and will continue to be established to gauge the effectiveness of the energy management practices in daily operations, management of facilities and future capital projects.

Document Revision History

Revision Number	Year	Description	Responsible VCS Individual
	2008	Inception of VCU Energy Sustainability Policy	Steve Poulos
1	2016	Policy Language and Appendix Data Updates	Steve Poulos
2	2025	Policy Language and Appendix Data Updates	Steve Poulos/Shihua Chen

End of Policy

Appendices

APPENDIX A

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT BASELINE MONITORING DATA 2002 – PRESENT

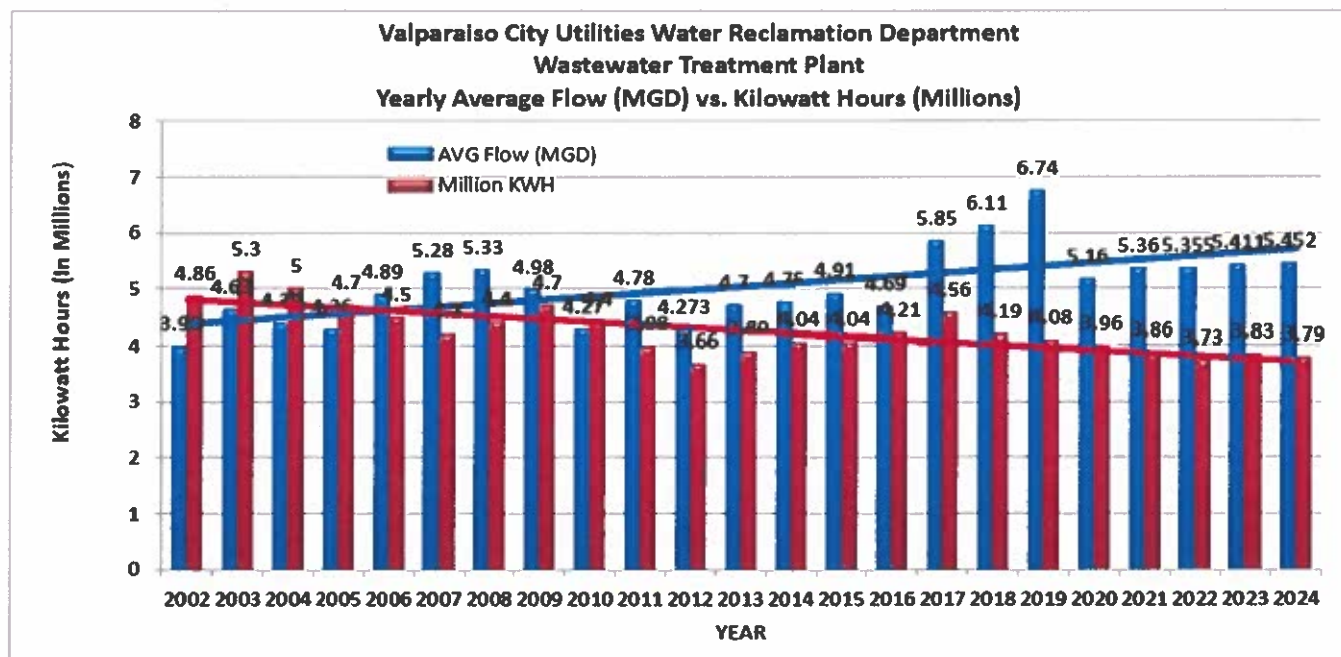
1. ELECTRICAL USAGE AT THE VALPARAISO WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

The City of Valparaiso's Elden Kuehl Pollution Control Facility or Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) is designed to treat an average daily flow of 10 million gallons per day and a peak flow of 22.5 million gallons per day during snow melt and wet weather events. During Phase I (2000-2002) and Phase II (2007-2009) WWTP upgrade and expansion the Utilities installed higher efficiency motors, variable frequency drives on all return activated sludge pumps (16) and main lift pumps (4), multistage blowers (4) for the biological aeration system and a capacitor unit to efficiently distribute power throughout the wastewater treatment plant.

Phase III (2024-2026) is currently in construction phase, which includes installation of high energy-efficient blowers (4), all new membrane fine bubble diffusers in the aeration tanks, air flow meters with control valves and individual dissolved oxygen sensors, cloth media filters (4) with a chemical addition system, centrifuges (2) for waste activated sludge thickening process, new anaerobic digester membrane covers (2) and electrical upgrades across the treatment plant.

Graph A.1.1 below illustrates the WWTP yearly electrical usage in millions of kilowatt hours versus the yearly average of millions of gallons per day wastewater being treated from 2002-2024.

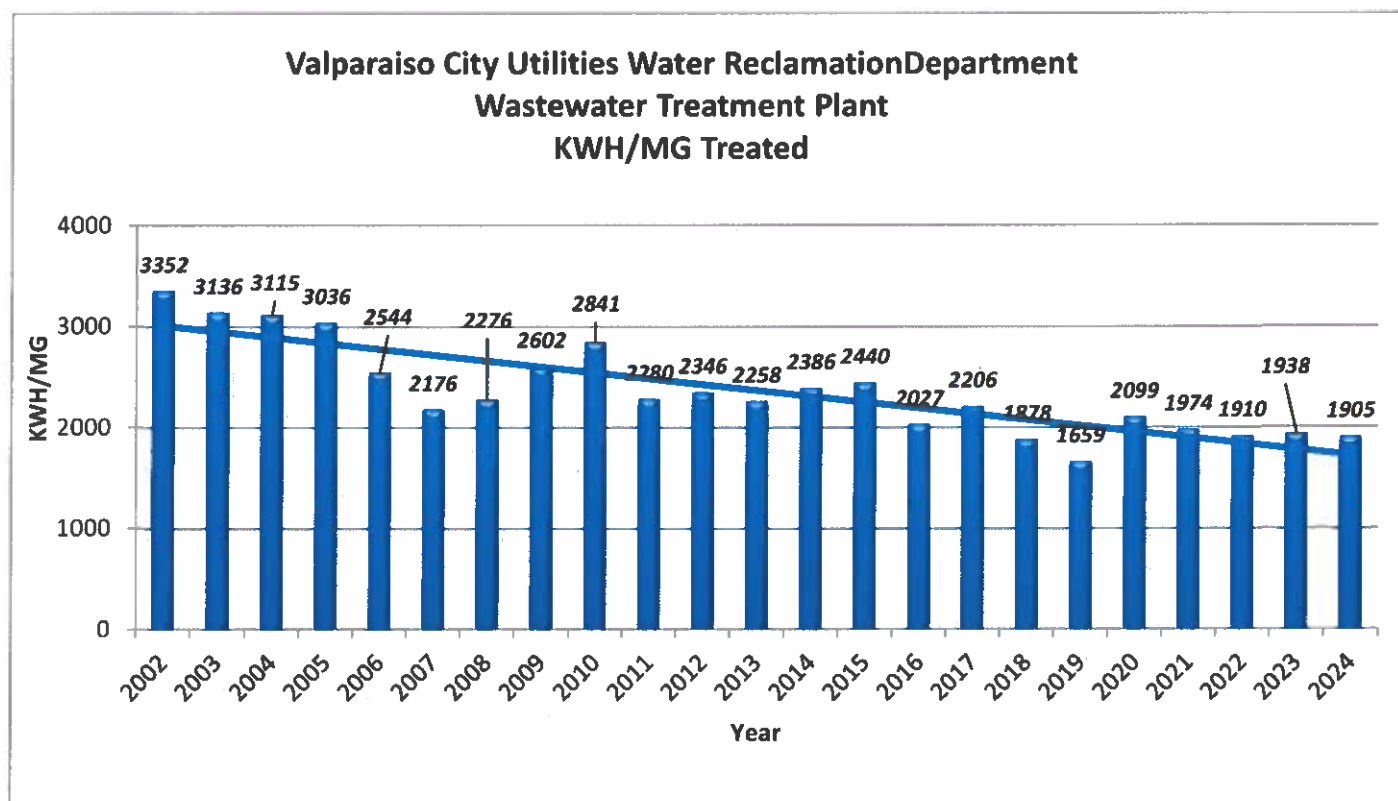
Graph A.1.1



Since 2002 the linear trends illustrate a gradual increase in wastewater being treated (avg flow/blue bar) and a decrease in kilowatt per hour usage (red bar).

Graph A.1.2 illustrates the WWTP ratio of the total yearly kilowatt hours utilized per the total yearly million gallons treated from 2002 through 2024.

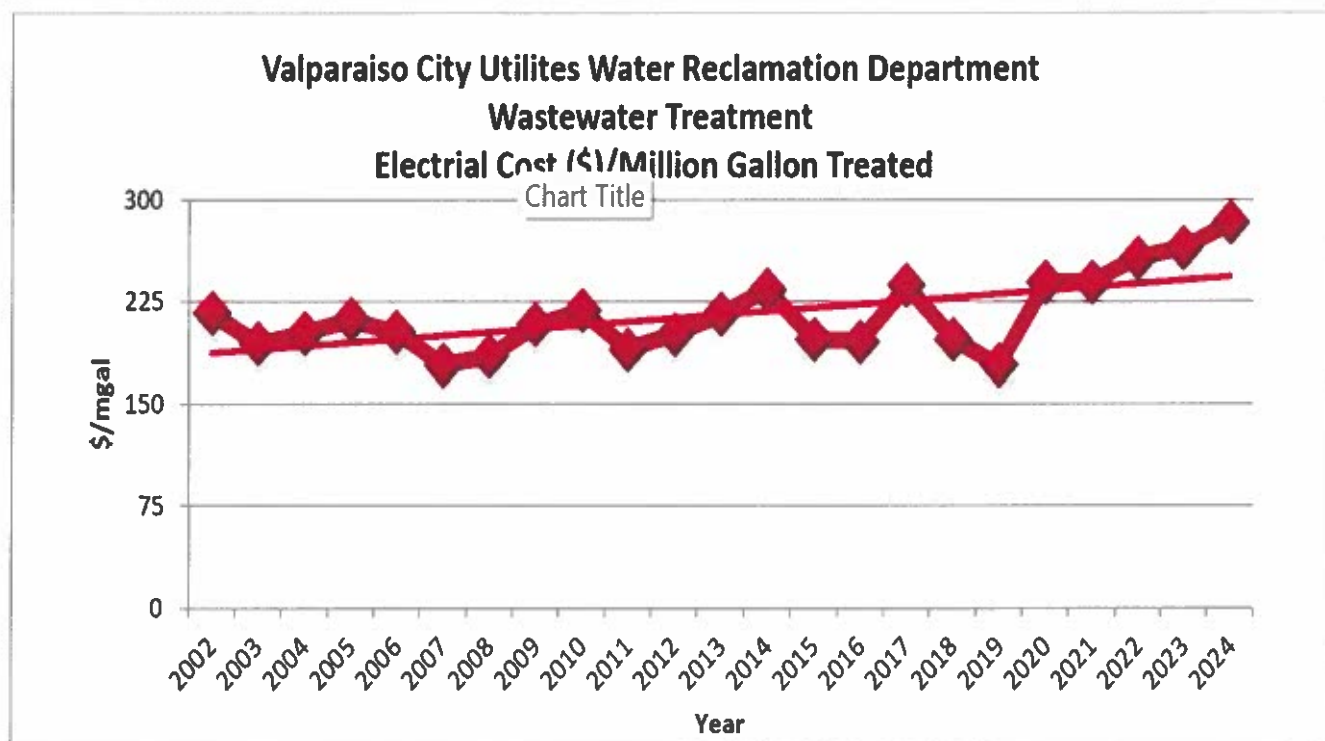
Graph A.1.2



Energy use at the Valparaiso WWTP will be affected by population, raw sewage influent loading, effluent quality requirements per regulations, process type, size and age of the facility. Additionally, as a combined sewer community, variations in precipitation can significantly affect the amount of energy demand at the facility based upon the utilization of the four (4) 100-125 horsepower lift pumps that convey the combined sewage to the facility for treatment. In 2016 the lift pumps were replaced with four (4) high efficiency 140 horsepower Flygt pumps. Under normal dry weather operations, the facility only utilizes 1 to 2 lift pumps for daily operations.

Graph A.1.3 illustrates the ratio of the total yearly WWTP electrical cost per the total yearly million gallons treated from 2002 through 2024.

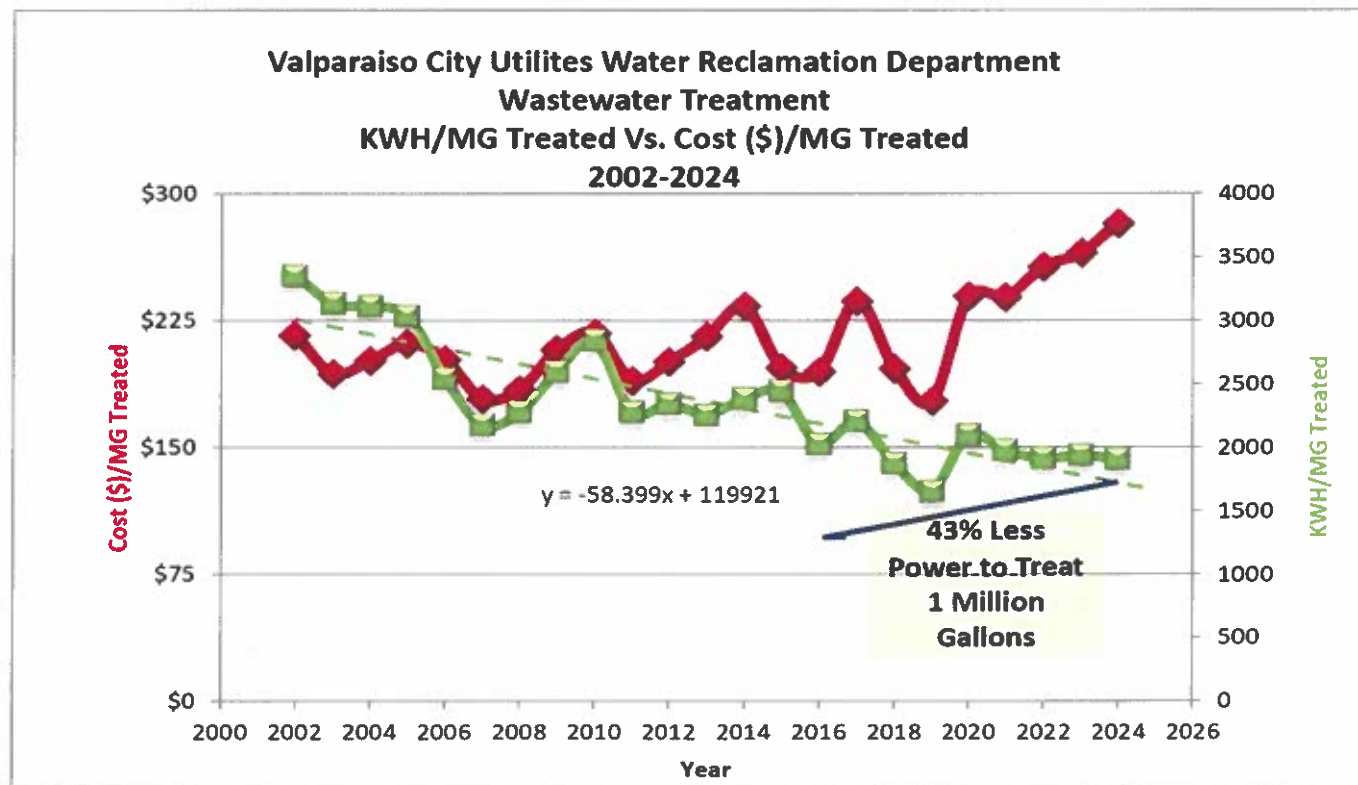
Graph A.1.3



Since mid-2005, the Utilities electrical provider is the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO). They have increased their fees several times (Fuel Cost Adjustment, Environmental Cost Recovery and Environmental Recovery Adjustment) due to the adjustments within their coal contract obligations. As a result, WWTP has experienced cost increases to treat every million gallons of wastewater, especially since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the cost per kilowatt hour went upward from \$0.065 (2005) to \$0.15 (2024), roughly a 130% increase in total or a 6.8% annual increase on average. While economies of scale will vary throughout the country, the ability of the Utilities staff to optimize treatment plant operations will also greatly influence energy use at the facility.

Graph A.1.4 illustrates the ratio of the total yearly WWTP electrical cost and the electric consumed per the total yearly million gallons treated from 2002 through 2024.

Graph A.1.4



2. NATURAL GAS USAGE AT THE VALPARAISO WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

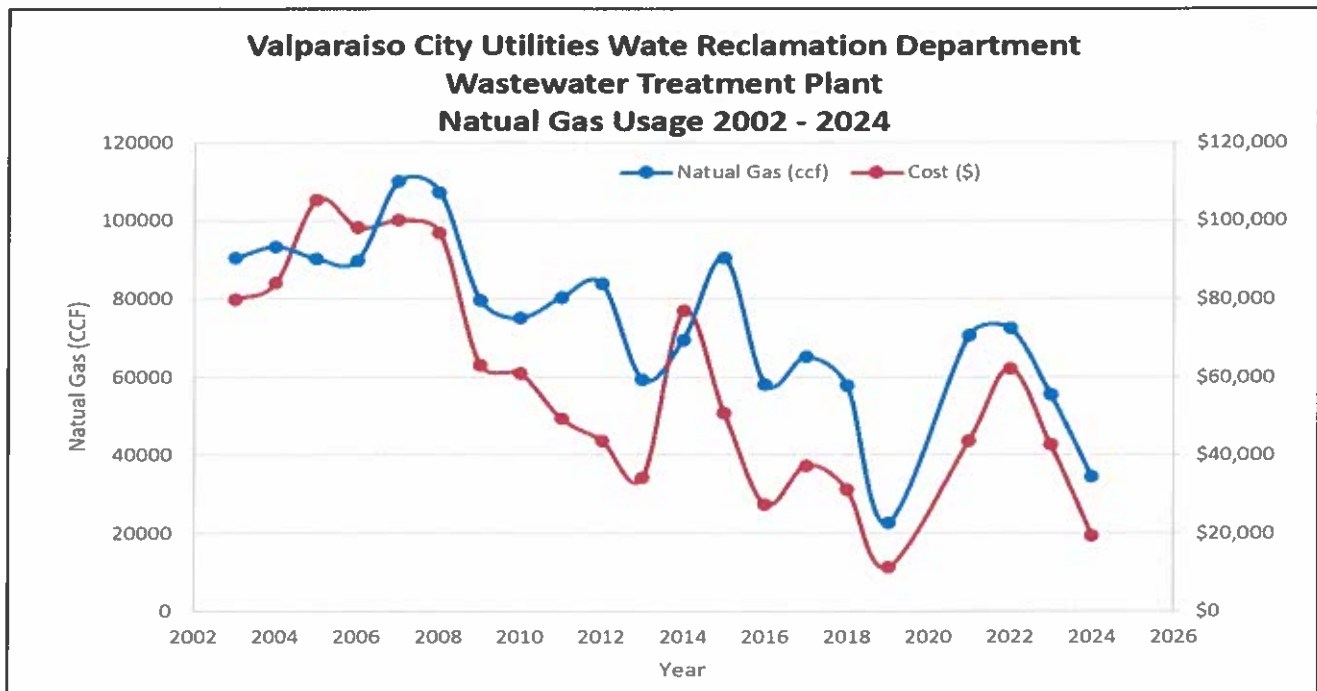
The entire campus at Valparaiso's Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) is heated by hot water heat generated from three (3) 6.5 million BTU boiler units. Also, the boilers will heat the anaerobic digestion process via external heat exchangers. The anaerobic digestion process generates methane gas, a valuable commodity that can be utilized within the existing boiler system and offset natural gas costs. Wastewater treatment plants typically can produce methane gas based upon the treatment plants sludge production. The sludge quantities produced at the Valparaiso WWTP and the proper operation and maintenance of the anaerobic digestion process and boiler units will determine optimal methane gas production.

As part of the Phase II (2007-2009) treatment plant upgrade, the anaerobic digestion mixing process was improved by the installation of a high rate (roto) mixing system within each anaerobic digester. This mixing system provides uniform mixing of the sludge to enhance digester gas production. Additionally in 2008, the VCU invested into new boiler system components to maximize the use of methane gas within

the boiler unit, reducing the frequency of natural gas boilers being activated based on load requirements and to provide operational efficiency through automation. In 2024 a new mixing systems and anaerobic gas holding lids will be installed.

Graph A.2.1 illustrates the natural gas consumption at the Valparaiso WWTP and the associated yearly cost.

Graph A.2.1



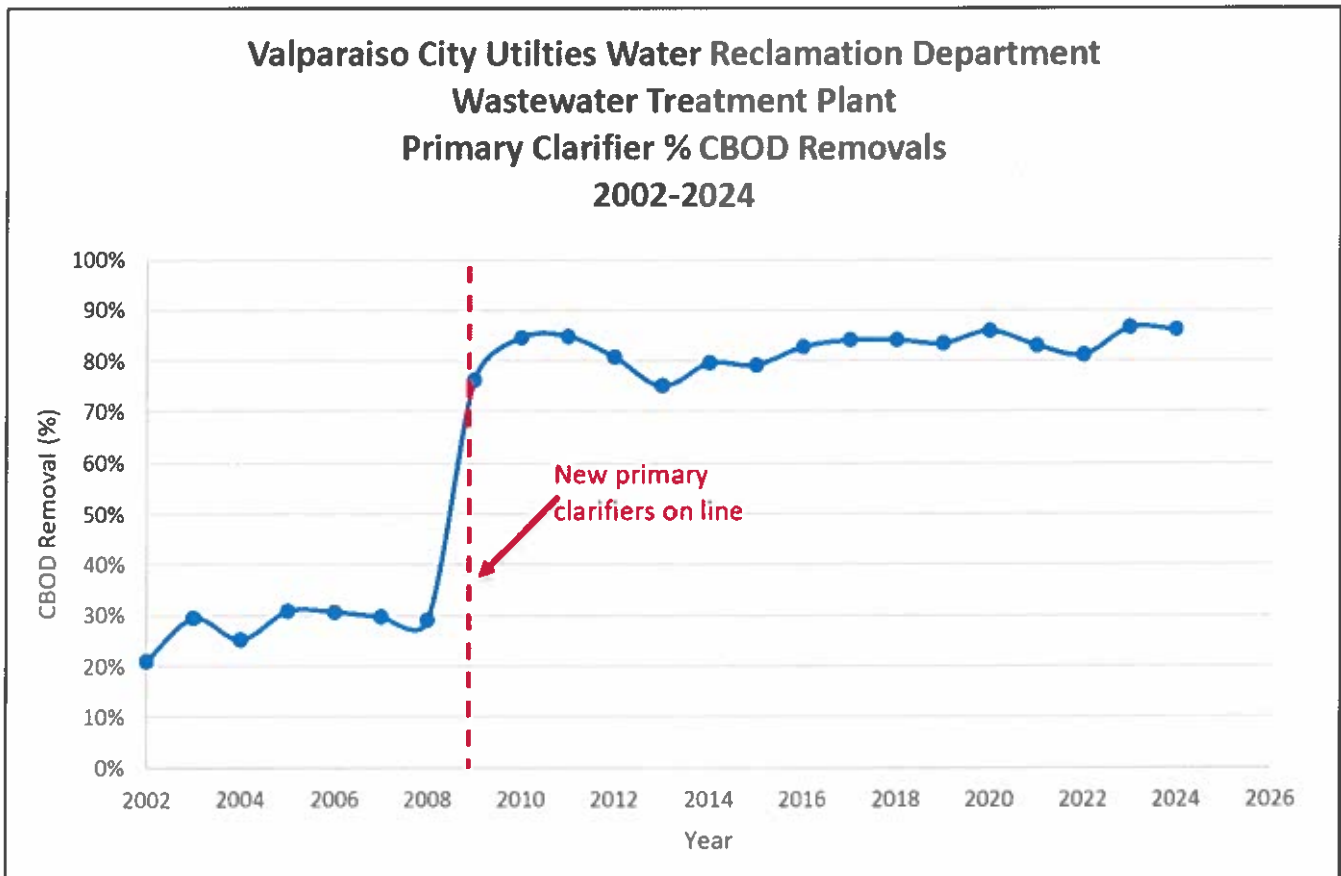
Investment of new boiler system components and digester optimization has resulted in the offset of natural gas use. Colder temperatures, mechanical breakdowns, annual maintenance and digester operation will greatly influence natural gas usage. Natural gas prices are subject to market fluctuations.

3. MULTI-STAGE BLOWER OPERATIONS AT THE VALPARAISO WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

The Valparaiso WWTP's activated sludge system utilizes 200-400 horsepower multistage blowers to provide dissolved oxygen to all 14 aeration basins to meet treatment plant objectives. These blower units are the largest motors within the plant operation and consume the most electricity. The Phase II (2007-2009) treatment plant upgrade increased the capacity of the primary clarifier settling basins. The result of this upgrade significantly reduced the plant loading to the activated sludge system, most notably Carbonaceous Biological Oxygen Demand (CBOD) and Total Suspended Solids (TSS).

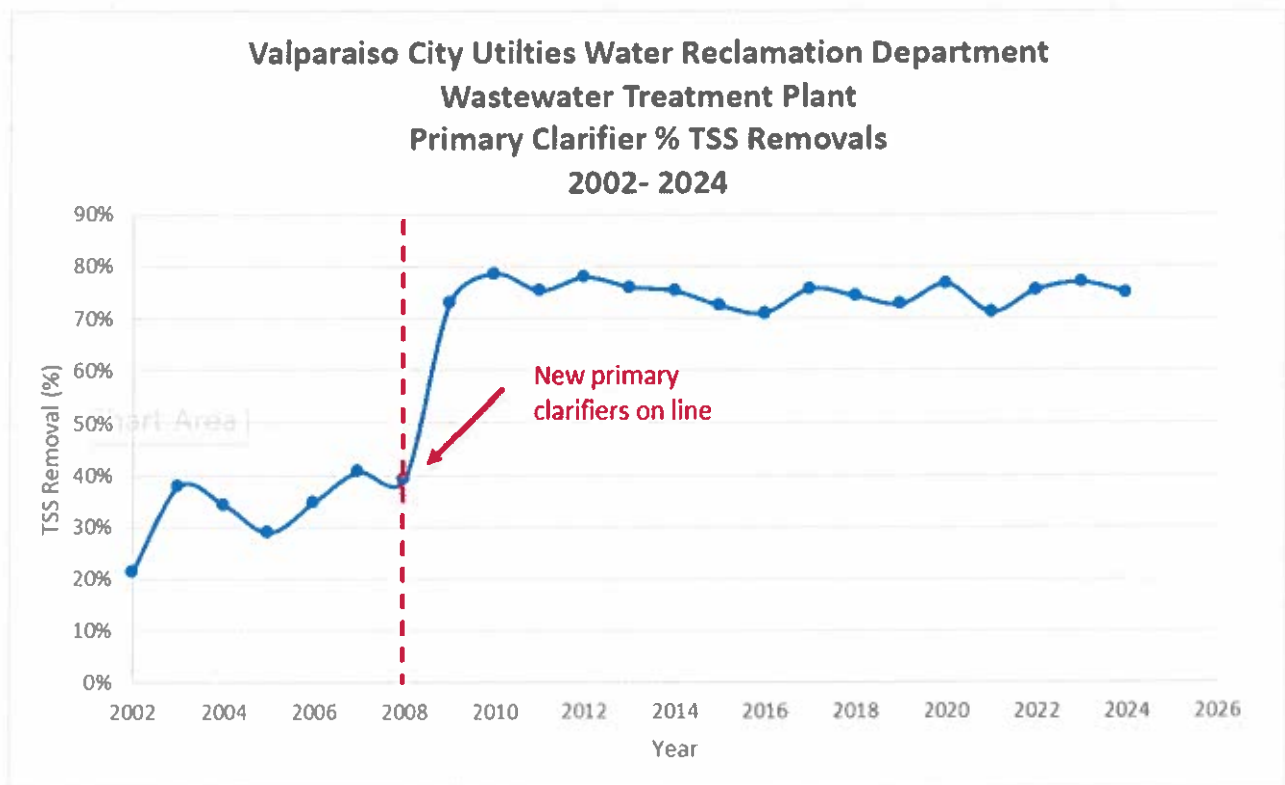
Graph A.3.1 below illustrates the new CBOD removal efficiencies of the primary clarifiers since the new primary clarifiers were initiated in December of 2008. The system has consistently shown CBOD removals within the 80 % range versus the 20-30 % percentile range. This has significantly reduced the organic loading to the activated sludge system.

Graph A.3.1



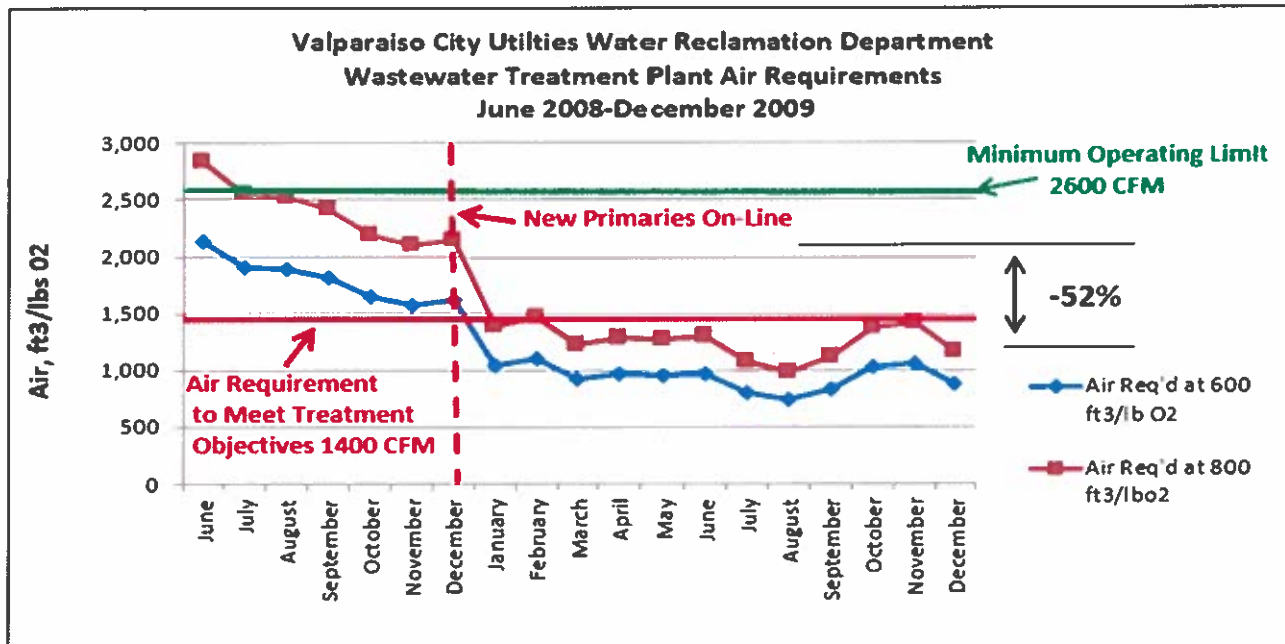
Graph A.3.2 illustrates the new TSS removal efficiencies of the primary clarifiers since the new primary clarifiers were initiated in December of 2008. The system has consistently shown TSS removals within the 70% range versus the 30% percent range. This has significantly reduced the loading to the activated sludge system.

Graph A.3.2



Graph A.3.3 illustrates the new air requirements of the activated sludge system based upon current loadings as of December 2009. The decrease in loadings to the activated sludge system has reduced the air requirements by approximately 52%.

Graph A.3.3



Reduced loadings to the current activated sludge system allows for opportunity to adjust the multi-stage blower air-flow rates which will reduce energy consumption, energy costs and continue to meet water quality effluent treatment objectives. The limitations of the current blower design limit the prospect of reducing energy inputs. The minimum operating limit of the 200-horsepower blower (smallest blower) is 2600 CFM. Operating below this limit can damage the blower shaft. The above representation also confirms that any air flows more than 1400 CFM would be an inefficient use of energy since all reactions for biological treatment objectives are achievable at the lower airflow rates.

Since the addition of Variable Frequency Drives (VFD) to the blower systems in 2012, the operations staff tried to turn down the blowers to reduce energy consumption. However, operational issues were observed. “Dead zones” of little or no aeration appeared in areas of the aeration tanks. Overnight and extended periods of operation at the reduced air flow also caused ammonia “bleed through” in some of the tanks. Running at the reduced air flow for several days caused thick blankets of scum to form in the aeration tanks. A conversation with Sanitaire yielded that although the reduced SCFM for biological treatment had been met, it was not sufficient for mixing the MLSS in the aeration tanks. Due to these operations issues, the blower units have been operated at the operating rate of at or above 2600 SCFM.

The new aeration system in phase III (2024-2026) is comprised of new blowers with new membrane diffusers, new flow meter and flow control valves and DO control probes to facilitate automated control.

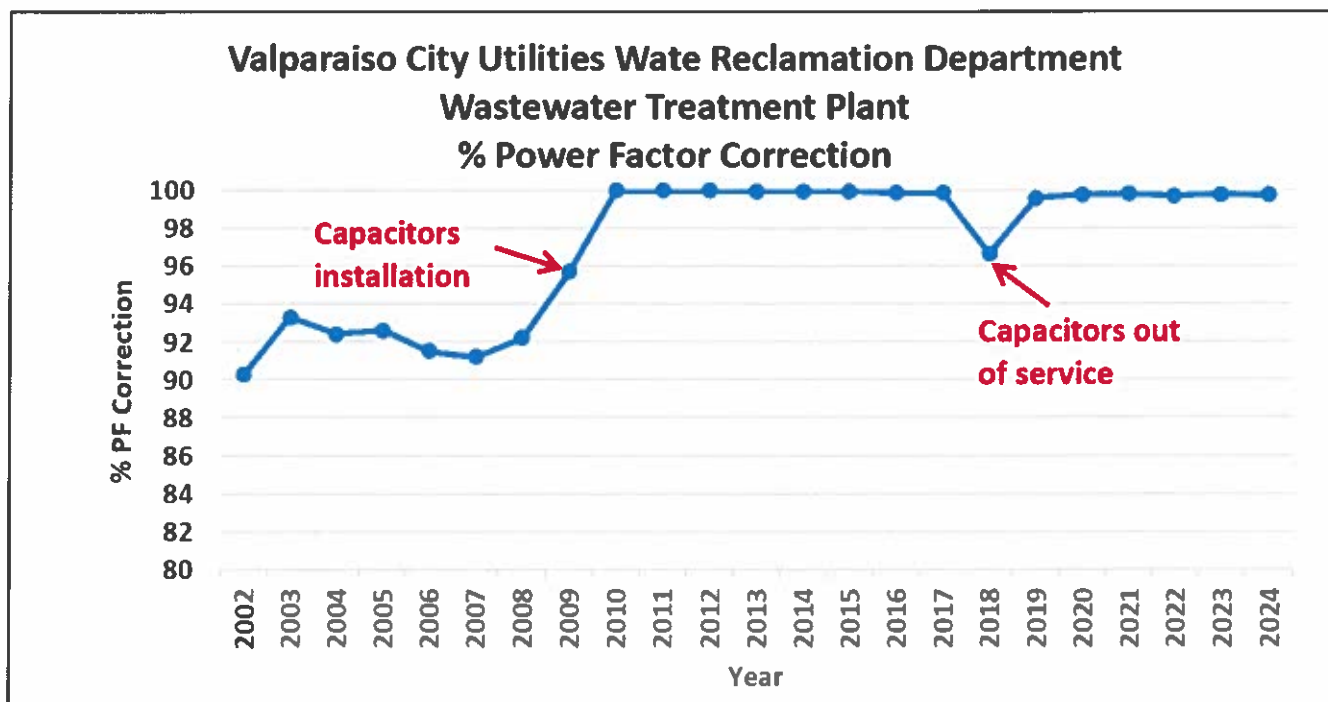
It will provide the operations staff with a more reliable and consistent means to meet the effluent compliance requirements and improve energy efficiency.

4. POWER FACTOR CORRECTION CAPACITORS

The power factor is the ratio of true power or watts to apparent power or volt amps. They are identical only when current and voltage are in phase than the power factor is 1.0. Power factor is expressed in decimal or percentage. Thus, power factors of 0.8 are the same as 80 percent. Low power factors are usually associated with motors and transformers. With low power factor loads, the electrical current flowing through electrical system components is higher than necessary to do the required work. This will result in excess heating of transformers and distribution equipment which can damage or shorten the life of the facility's equipment. A low power factor can also cause low-voltage conditions, resulting in dimming of lights, sluggish motor operations and exposing the Utilities to power factor penalties by NIPSCO.

Graph A.4.1 below illustrates the average yearly % Power Factor at the Valparaiso wastewater Treatment Plant.

Graph A.4.1



The Phase II (2007-2009) treatment plant upgrade included the installation of power factor correction capacitors. The electrical provider, NIPSCO, provides electrical demand credits for power factors that are above 90%. The new installation allows the Valparaiso wastewater treatment plant to achieve a power factor of 99.99% thus reducing the demand charges on a monthly electrical bill by 9.99% thus resulting in cost savings to the Utilities.

APPENDIX B

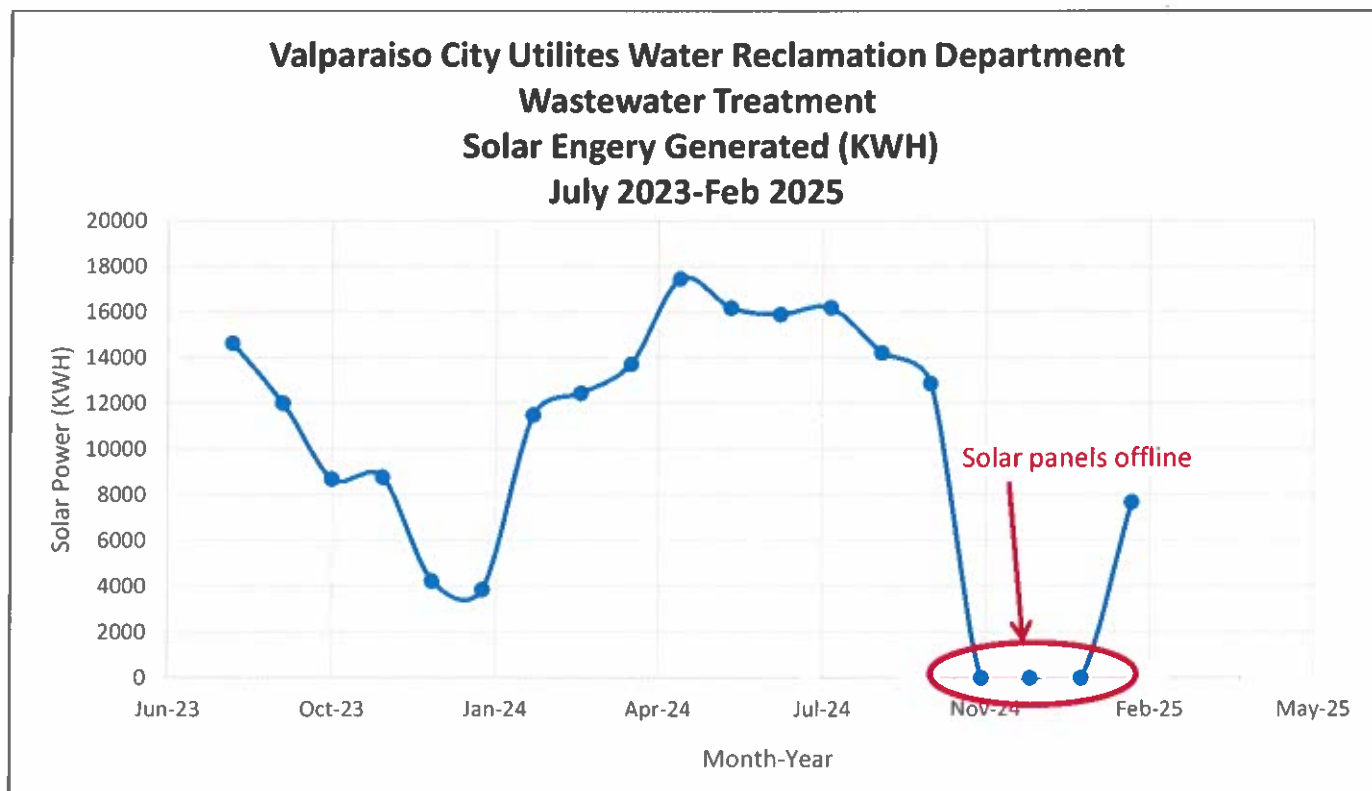
WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT RENEWABLE ENERGY 2002 – PRESENT

1. SOLAR ENERGY UTILIZATION

Solar power offers a sustainable and cost-effective solution to reduce energy costs and environmental impact and improve energy resilience for wastewater and water utilities. As technology advances and solar prices continue to fall, VCS has taken the opportunity to install solar panels at WWTP. The solar system was online in August 2023.

Graph B.1.1 below shows the solar power generation in each month.

Graph B.1.1



In 2024 the solar panels generated over 134,000 KWH electricity. This solar power accounted for 3.4% of the total electricity needs for the operations of the - WWTP and saved rate payers over \$19,800.

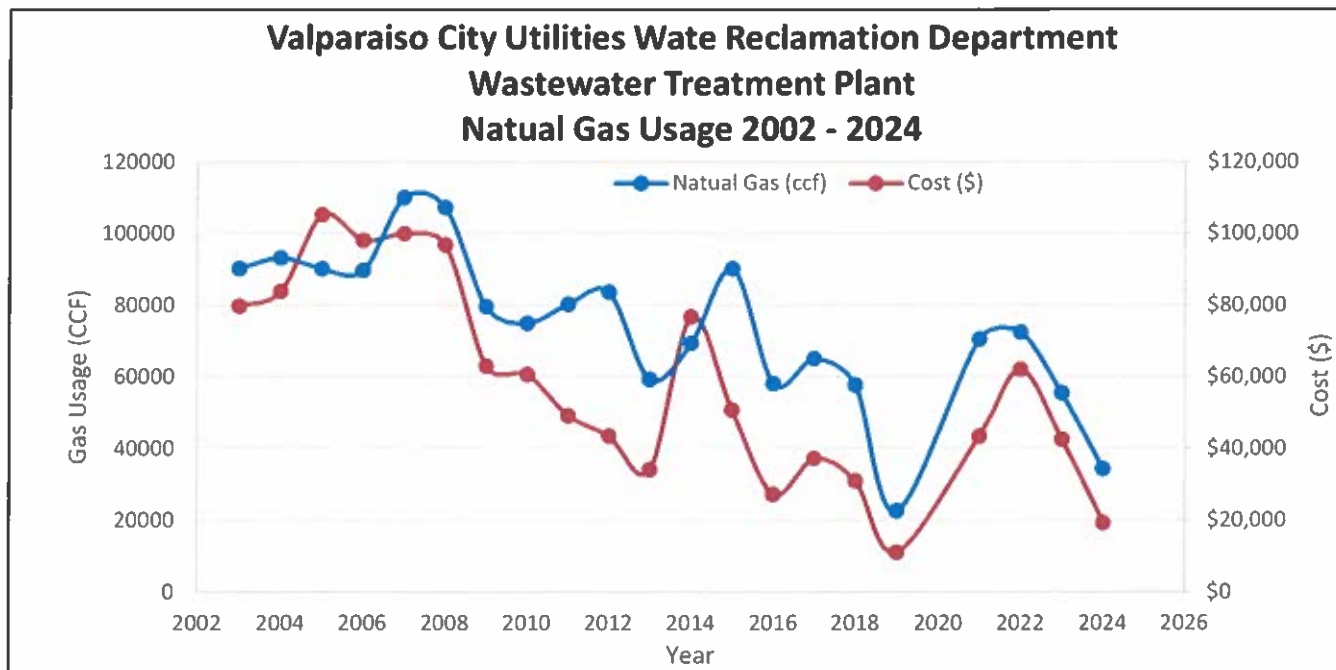
2. NATURAL GAS/BIOGAS USAGE AT THE VALPARAISO WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

The entire campus at Valparaiso's Wastewater Treatment Plant is heated by hot water heat generated from three (3) 6.5 million BTU boiler units. Also, the boilers will heat the anaerobic digestion process via external heat exchangers. The anaerobic digestion process generates methane gas, a valuable commodity that can be utilized within the existing boiler system and offset natural gas costs. Wastewater treatment plants typically can produce methane gas based upon the treatment plants sludge production. The sludge quantities produced at the Valparaiso WWTP and the proper operation and maintenance of the anaerobic digestion process and boiler units will determine optimal methane gas production.

As part of the Phase II (2007-2009) treatment plant upgrade, the anaerobic digestion mixing process was improved by the installation of a high rate (roto) mixing system within each anaerobic digester. This mixing system provides uniform mixing of the sludge to enhance digester gas production. Additionally in 2008, the VCU invested into new boiler system components to maximize the use of methane gas within the boiler unit, reducing the frequency of natural gas boilers being activated based on load requirements and to provide operational efficiency through automation.

Graph B.2.1 illustrates the natural gas consumption at Valparaiso WWTP and the associated yearly cost.

Graph B.2.1



The investment of new boiler system components and digester optimization has resulted in the offset of natural gas use. Colder temperatures, mechanical breakdowns, annual maintenance and digester operation will greatly influence natural gas usage. Natural gas prices are subject to market fluctuations.

3. NIPSCO ENERGY EFFICIENCY REBATE PROGRAM

Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) offers an energy efficiency rebate program tailored for commercial customers, aiming to promote energy savings and reduce operational costs. This program provides incentives for businesses that replace outdated, less efficient equipment with high-efficiency models such as VFD and HVAC. VCU WRD is undergoing large-scale system upgrades which include replacing the whole aeration system in WWTP, rebuilding a regional lift station and other treatment processes and facilities.

It is clear that significant energy savings will be realized once the upgrades are completed and the new equipment is operational. However, VCU also recognizes the opportunity for securing additional energy efficiency rebates from NIPSCO to offset portion of the capital investments, even though the amounts may be modest.

Table B.3.1 indicates the proposed NIPSCO rebate.

Table B.3.1

Project	Energy Savings (KWH)	Proposed Rebate
WRD Sturdy Road Lift Station	367,808	\$44,136.96

APPENDIX C

WATER TREATMENT PLANT BASELINE MONITORING DATA 2009 – PRESENT

1. HISTORY

The Valparaiso Water Department was founded in 1885 and operates two treatment plants serving its customers. The Airport (AP) treatment plant was built in 1963 and has undergone multiple expansions, the most recent in 2016. The Flint Lake (FL) treatment plant, originally established in 1885, has also been expanded several times. The current Flint Lake plant was constructed in 1993 and expanded in 2016.

2. TREATMENT SYSTEMS AND OPERATIONS

Water is supplied to both treatment plants by four well fields with a total of 24 wells. The AP plant has four pressure filters, while the FL plant has five, all designed to remove iron and manganese from raw water. Throughout the treatment process, liquid chlorine (sodium hypochlorite) is added, along with fluoride and phosphate, before the treated water is distributed. The plants have a combined design capacity of 14 million gallons per day (MGD), with a current average flow of 4.7 MGD. Together, they serve a population of approximately 36,000 customers.

In 2009, EPA Region 5 and IDEM partnered with 10 water and wastewater utilities in Indiana to launch a two (2) year *Indiana Energy Management Pilot Program* (Pilot). Throughout the Pilot, Valparaiso Water Department management and staff actively participated in identifying practical ways to reduce energy consumption and costs.

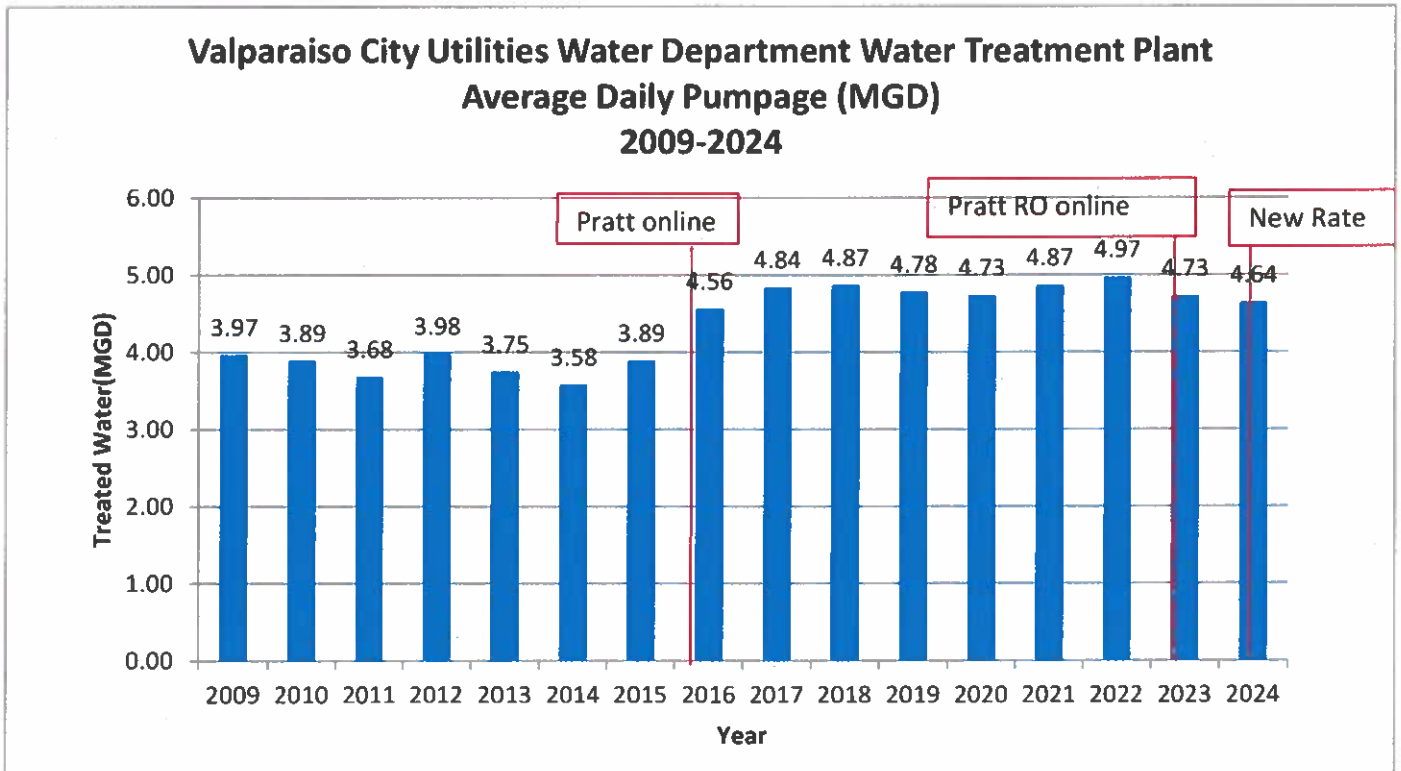
Following the successful completion of the Pilot, the VCU Water Department continued its commitment to improving energy efficiency by implementing key findings, optimizing treatment processes, installing energy-efficient equipment, and cross-training employees.

This documentation includes the baseline monitoring data from 2009 to 2024.

3. ENERGY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM BASELINE

Graph C.3.1 below shows the yearly average water pumpage (MGD) from 2009 – 2024.

Graph C.3.1

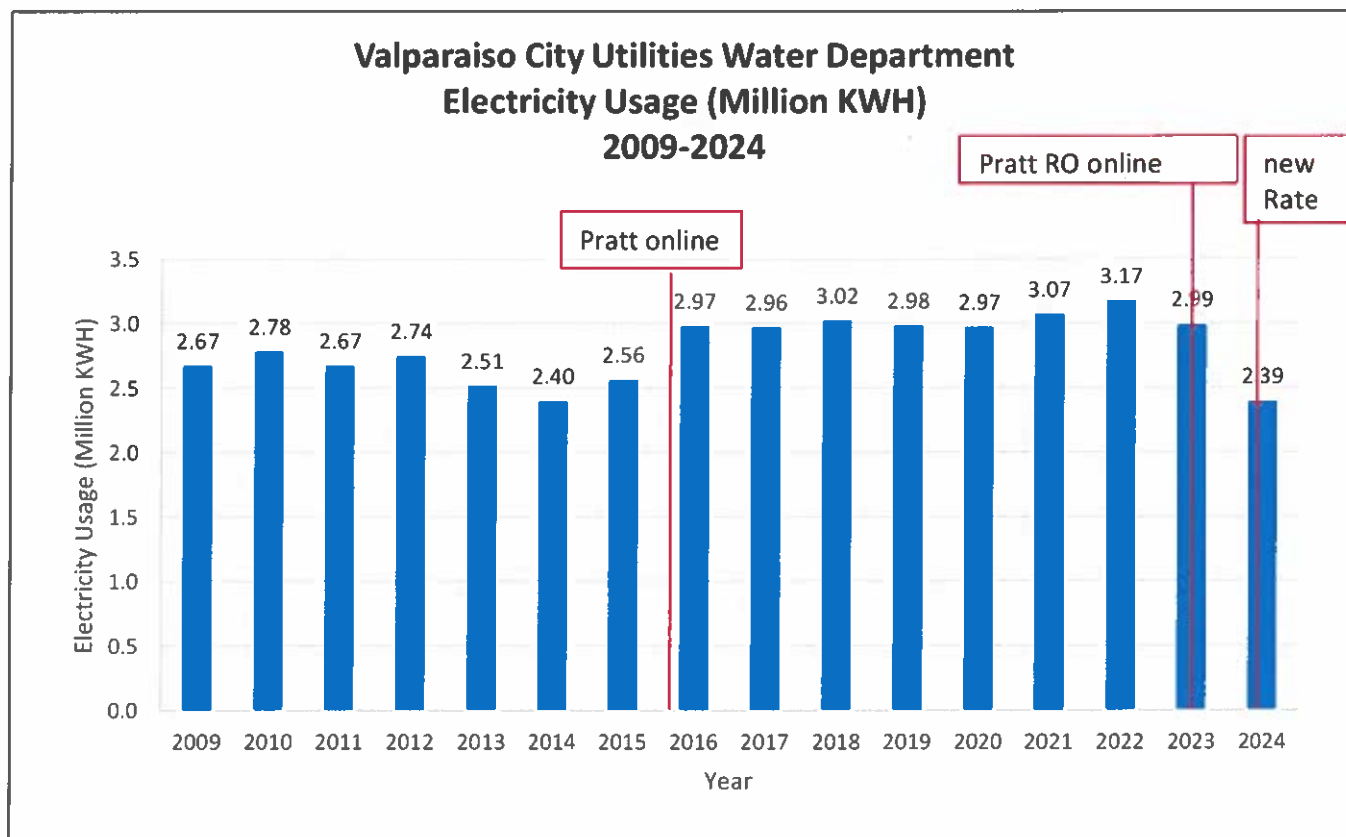


From 2009-2015, the average daily pumpage remained relatively stable at approximately 3.8 MGD. However, in October 2015 Pratt Industries was brought online, leading to an increase in average daily pumpage. On average Pratt Industries has used about 0.8- 1.1 MGD water for their paper manufacturing process.

In June 2023 Pratt Industries installed a reverse osmosis (RO) system to recycle their wastewater as a raw water source for manufacturing. As a result, VCU has observed a noticeable reduction both in water demand and wastewater discharges from Pratt Industries. Additionally, in 2024 a new water and wastewater rate was approved by the City's Common Council and this may have encouraged further water conservation efforts among customers.

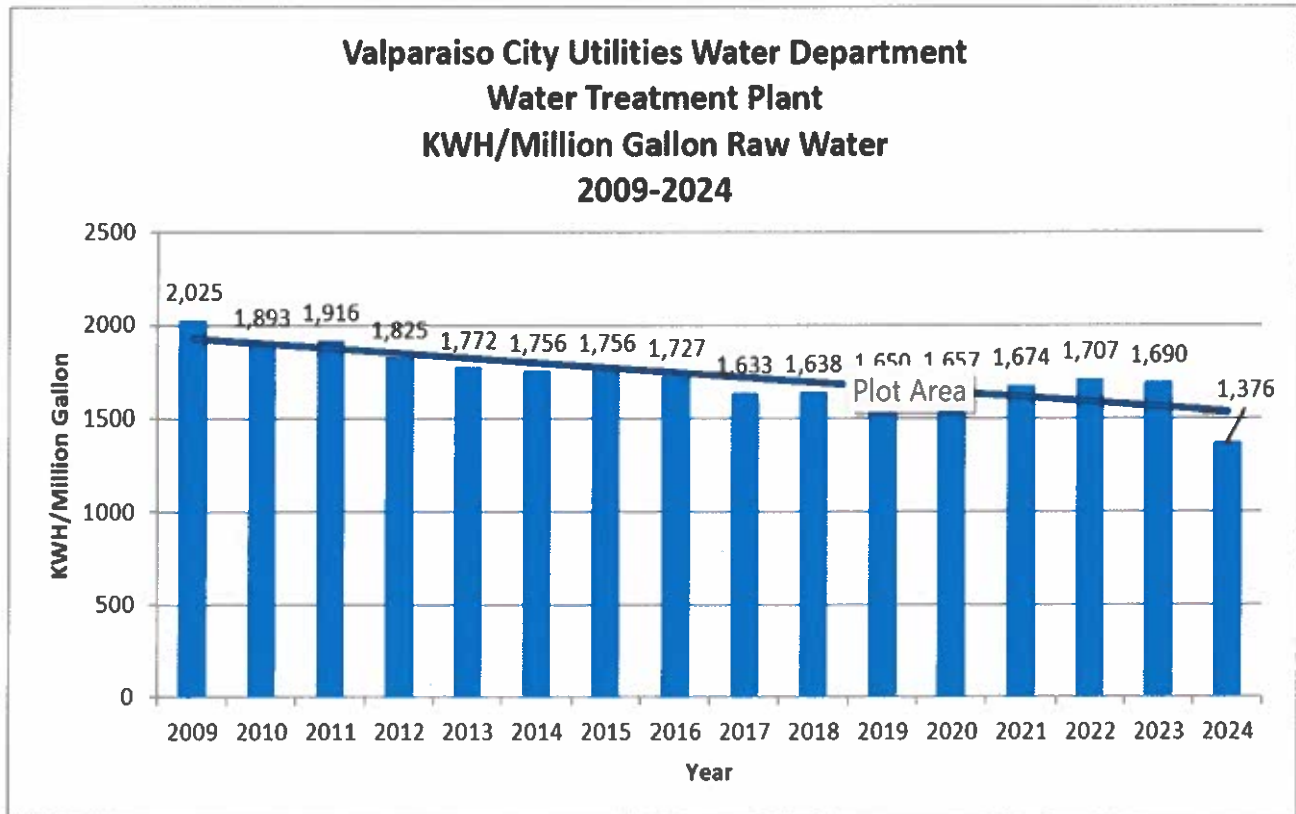
Graph C.3.2 shows energy usage from 2009 to 2024 and illustrates that, from 2009 to 2015, yearly electricity usage followed a general downward trend. However, after Pratt Industries came online in October 2015, electricity usage spiked accordingly

Graph C.3.2



Graph C.3.3 shows the energy consumption to treat every million gallons of raw water.

Graph C.3.3

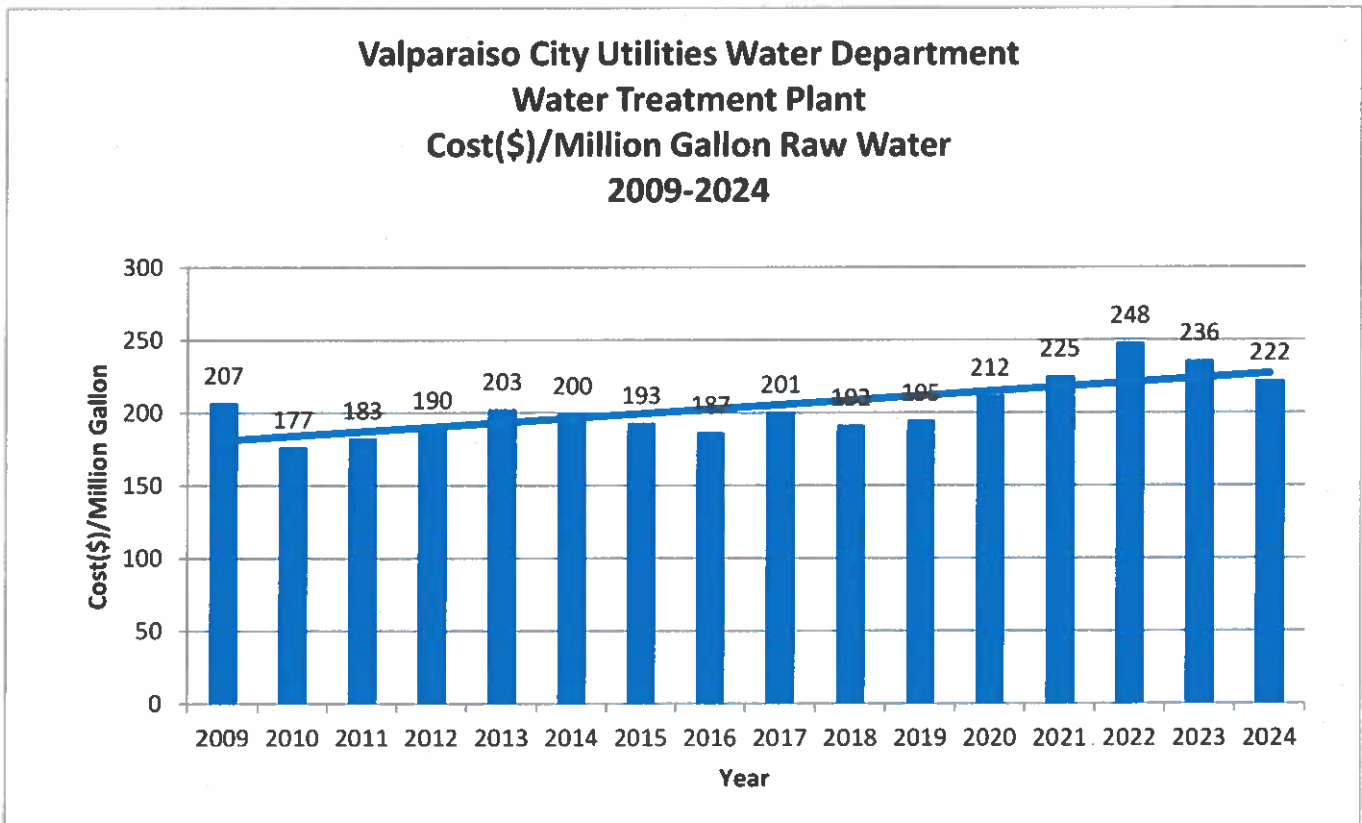


From 2009 to 2024, the electricity used to treat each million gallons of water has decreased. This linear trend reflects improved energy efficiency in day-to-day operations. Over the past 15 years, the VCU Water Department has made significant investments in upgrading aging equipment and infrastructure while optimizing treatment processes.

Some of the key initiatives include closely monitoring well performances, prioritizing the cleaning of water wells, actively maintaining and overhauling pumping equipment, installing new wells with variable frequency drive (VFD) controls and well level sensors. Additionally, well pumps and high-service pumps are operated at or near their optimal efficiency points. Energy-efficient LED lights have replaced outdated fluorescent lighting at both plants, and SCADA control system programs have been optimized to reduce glitches. All these measures have contributed to overall improvements in energy efficiency.

Graph C.3.4 shows the cost to treat every million gallons of raw water.

Graph C.3.4

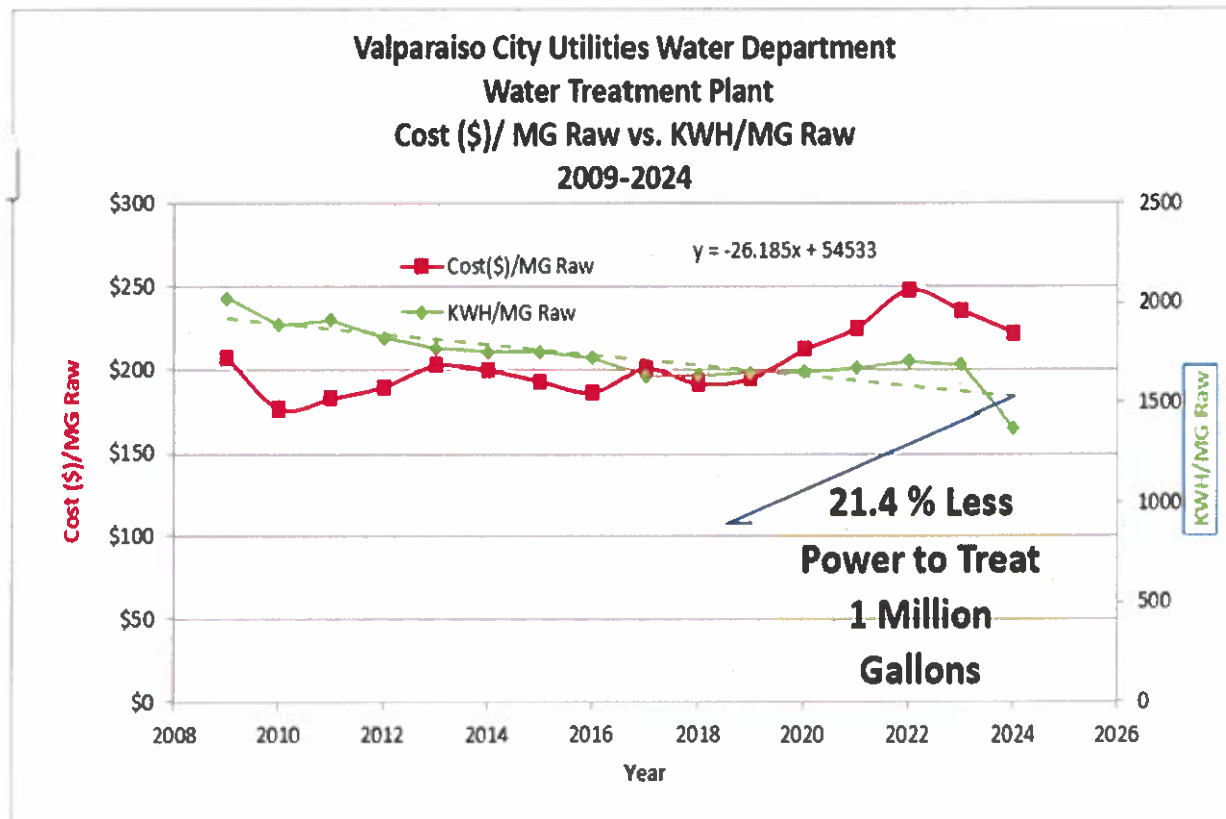


From the monitoring period of 2009 to 2024 Valparaiso Water Treatment Plant has seen a steady increase in electricity cost (\$) for each million gallons of raw water. This is mainly because NIPSCO has been increasing their energy prices and fees (fuel cost adjustment, environmental cost recovery, environmental recovery adjustment) to recover the cost increases for their power generation and distribution operations. For example, the cost per kilowatt hour went upward from \$0.075 (2005) to \$0.16 (2024), roughly a 113% increase in total or a 6.0 % annual increase on average.

While the electricity rate spikes by NIPSCO are out of VCU's control, VCU staff constantly explore opportunities to improve energy efficiency and lower the energy costs in our day-to-day operations.

Graph C.3.5 the electricity used and the associated cost to treat every million gallons of raw water.

Graph C.3.5



APPENDIX D

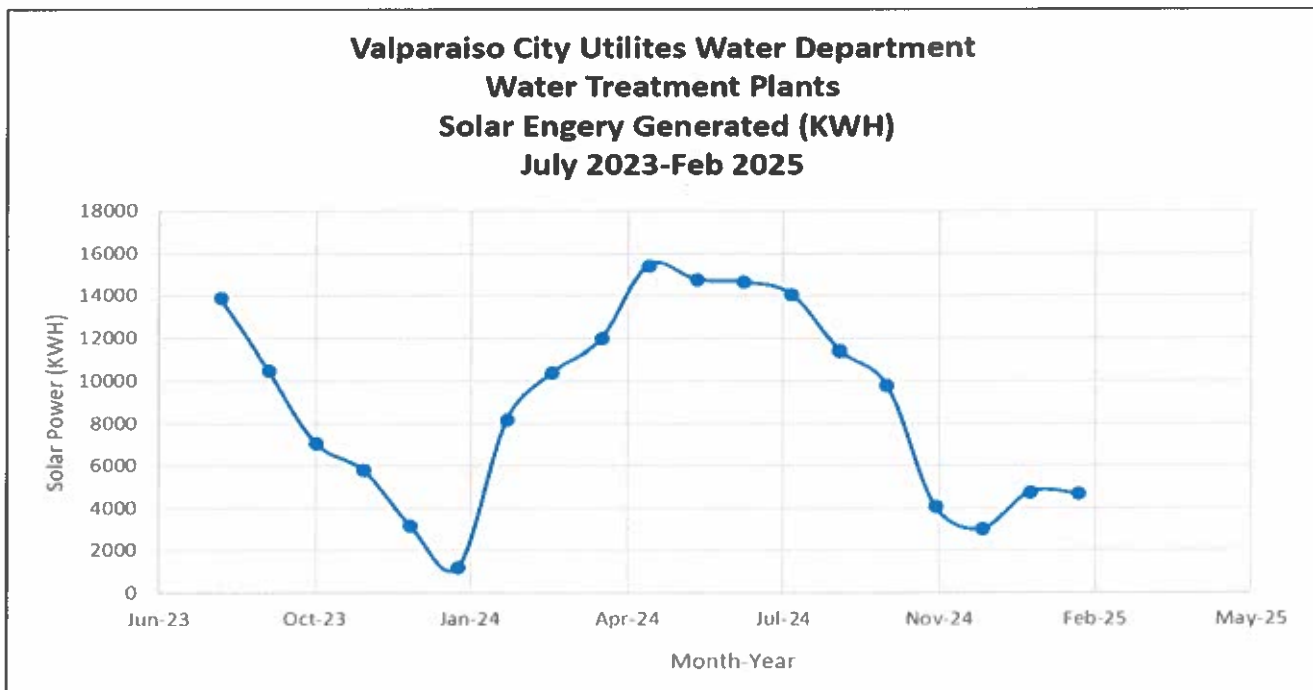
WATER TREATMENT PLANT RENEWABLE ENERGY 2009 – PRESENT

1. SOLAR ENERGY UTILIZATION

Solar power offers a sustainable and cost-effective solution to reduce energy costs and environmental impact and improve energy resilience for wastewater and water utilities. As technology advances and solar prices continue to fall, VCS has taken the opportunity to install solar panels at the two water treatment plants. The solar system was online in August 2023.

Graph D.1.1 below shows the combined solar power generation in both water plants in each month.

Graph D.1.1



In 2024 the solar panels generated over 119,000 KWH electricity. This solar power accounted for 4.5 % of the total electricity needs for the operations of the water treatment plants and saved rate payers over \$19,200.

2. NIPSCO ENERGY EFFICIENCY REBATE PROGRAM

NIPSCO offers an energy efficiency rebate program tailored for commercial customers, aiming to promote energy savings and reduce operational costs. This program provides incentives for businesses that replace outdated, less efficient equipment with high-efficiency models such as VFD and HVAC.

VCU Water Department is undergoing a large-scale system upgrade including installing several new wells and replacing old filters at the Airport treatment plant. In addition, new VFDs have been installed on existing wells which improve energy efficiency and extend the wells' service lives.

Table D.2.1 indicates the proposed NIPSCO rebate.

Table D.2.1

Project	Energy Savings (KWH)	Proposed Rebate
WD VFDs for Wells	930,834	\$109,895

APPENDIX E

VALPARAISO CITY UTILITIES ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY POLICY 2002 – PRESENT SUMMARY

1. ENERGY IMPACTS

Water and wastewater utilities are among the most energy-intensive public services, consuming vast amounts of electricity to pump, treat, and distribute water, and then collect, pump, treat and discharge wastewater. With growing concerns over energy costs, environmental impacts and sustainability, improving energy efficiency in these utilities is essential.

2. VCU KEY SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

VCU has recognized both the challenges and opportunities in energy efficiency and implemented various measures to reduce energy consumption and operational costs over the past 20 years. Going back to the 3 Tier Energy Approach, the key initiatives include:

- Operational plant optimization based on true energy needs.
- Implementation of electric power demand management strategies, including power factor correction capacitors.
- Evaluation and selection of the most cost-effective NIPSCO electric rate plans for both water and wastewater operations.
- Participation in NIPSCO energy efficiency incentive programs for both water and wastewater plants
- Installation of variable frequency drives (VFDs) on motors and pumps for both water and wastewater plants.
- Installation of premium high efficiency motors and pumps for both water and wastewater plants
- Capital upgrades of biological aeration system to have high efficiency blowers and fine bubble diffusers for wastewater plant which uses significant power.
- Expansion of primary clarifiers in the wastewater plant to enhance the primary treatment efficiencies and reduce energy needs within the operation.
- Replacement of traditional lighting with energy-efficient LED fixtures at water and wastewater plants
- Generation of renewable methane gas through sludge digestion, utilized to supplement energy needs at the wastewater plant.
- Integration of renewable solar energy systems at both water and wastewater plants that has reduced energy use, provided operational costs savings and reduced CO2 emissions.

As a result of VCU's proactive approach to energy efficiency management and sustainability, substantial reductions in energy consumption, greenhouse gases and associated cost savings have been realized from 2004 to the present. These actions by VCU and the associated results are summarized below in **Table E.2.1** which shows the combined energy improvements, total cost savings and the reduction in greenhouse gases at both the wastewater and water treatment plants.

Table E.2.1

Energy Improvement	Department	Monitoring Period	Total Energy Reduction (KWH)	Total Cost Savings (\$)	Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Metric Tons CO ₂)
Electricity Reduction from Process Optimization	WRD Plant	2004-2024	34,967,290	\$3,706,437	24,792
Equipment Upgrade ¹	WD Plants	2009-2024	8,157,783	\$1,037,800	5,784
New LED Lighting ²	WRD Plant	2022-2024	313,392	\$70,806	222
	WD Plants	2019-2024	415,932	\$52,100	295
Solar Energy ³	WRD Plant	2024	134,524	\$19,890	95
	WD Plants	2024	119,044	\$19,237	84
NIPSCO Energy Rebates ⁴	WD Plants	2022-2025	930,834	\$109,895	660
	WRD Plant	2026	367,808	\$44,137	261
WRD Blower Upgrade ⁵	WRD Plant	2026	500,000	\$74,188	355
Natural Gas Generation and Use ⁶	WRD Plant	2009-2024	415,363	\$229,630	2,197
Total				\$4,972,456	31,851

Notes:

1. Electricity reduction (KWH) resulted from all the holistic measures implemented across all three VCU plants, including the process optimization, equipment upgrade, electricity rate analysis, power factor management, lighting replacement, etc. Refer to Table E.2.2 and Table E. 2.3 for calculation details. 1 KWH electricity is equivalent to 7.09×10^{-4} metric tons CO₂.
2. New LED lighting generated energy and cost savings are from contractor's estimates and included in item 1. To avoid duplication, these specific cost savings are excluded from the total summarized savings.
3. Solar energy generated cost savings are included in Item 1. To avoid duplication, these specific cost savings are excluded from the total summarized savings. 1 KWH electricity is equivalent to 7.09×10^{-4} metric tons CO₂.
4. Energy reduction and cost savings are provided by NIPSCO. 1 KWH electricity is equivalent to 7.09×10^{-4} metric tons CO₂.
5. New blower upgrade is underway. The energy reduction and cost savings are from engineer's estimates. 1 KWH electricity is equivalent to 7.09×10^{-4} metric tons CO₂.
6. Natural gas was measured in therms (a scientific unit of heat equal to 100,000 British thermal units). 1 therm natural gas is equivalent to 5.29×10^{-3} metric ton CO₂. Refer to Table E.2.4 for calculation details.

Table E.2.2 below shows the detailed calculations of electricity savings and equivalent greenhouse gas reduction at water treatment plants.

Table E.2.2

Year	WD Electricity (Million KWH)	RAW Water Pumpage (MG)	Equivalent Electricity Usage Based on 2008 Average (Million KWH)	Electricity Reduction (KWH)	AVG Electricity Cost (\$)/KWH	AVG Electricity Savings (\$)	GHG Reduction Equivalent (CO2 Metric Tons)
2008	2.82557	1390.99	2.825568				
2009	2.66903	1318.23	2.677765858	8,734	\$0.1022	\$893	6
2010	2.77789	1467.54	2.981070942	203,182	\$0.0933	\$18,957	144
2011	2.66752	1392.56	2.828761262	161,241	\$0.0954	\$15,381	114
2012	2.74281	1502.55	3.052190096	309,378	\$0.1043	\$32,259	219
2013	2.51311	1418.47	2.881389152	368,277	\$0.1144	\$42,116	261
2014	2.39549	1364.43	2.771611616	376,124	\$0.1138	\$42,799	267
2015	2.56013	1458.25	2.962195755	402,068	\$0.1100	\$44,225	285
2016	2.97291	1721.57	3.497079397	524,167	\$0.1080	\$56,612	372
2017	2.96366	1814.50	3.68586174	722,206	\$0.1228	\$88,705	512
2018	3.01584	1841.29	3.740271113	724,429	\$0.1169	\$84,718	514
2019	2.97715	1804.31	3.665168709	688,017	\$0.1182	\$81,290	488
2020	2.96620	1790.30	3.636701343	670,501	\$0.1280	\$85,796	475
2021	3.06626	1831.50	3.720394476	654,138	\$0.1346	\$88,038	464
2022	3.17100	1857.61	3.773432696	602,433	\$0.1454	\$87,618	427
2023	2.98874	1768.50	3.592420219	603,684	\$0.1396	\$84,285	428
2024	2.39184	1738.29	3.531043359	1,139,203	\$0.1616	\$184,109	808
Average				509,861	0.119	64,863	361
Total				8,157,783		\$1,037,800	5,784

Table E.2.3 below shows the detailed calculations of electricity savings and equivalent greenhouse gas reduction at wastewater treatment plant.

Table E.2.3

Year	WRD Electricity (KWH)	Treated Volume (MG)	Equivalent Electricity (KWH) Usage Based on 2003 Average	Electricity Reduction (KWH)	AVG Electricity Cost (\$)/KWH	AVG Electricity Savings (\$)	GHG reduction Equivalent (CO2 Metric Tons)
2003	5,296,320	1689	5,296,320		\$0.0618		
2004	4,999,680	1605	5,032,915	33,235	\$0.0647	\$2,149	24
2005	4,711,680	1552	4,866,719	155,039	\$0.0697	\$10,805	110
2006	4,543,680	1786	5,600,490	1,056,810	\$0.0794	\$83,908	749
2007	4,200,000	1930	6,052,041	1,852,041	\$0.0822	\$152,190	1,313
2008	4,417,920	1941	6,086,535	1,668,615	\$0.0810	\$135,189	1,183
2009	4,727,040	1817	5,697,699	970,659	\$0.0799	\$77,559	688
2010	4,425,600	1558	4,885,534	459,934	\$0.0767	\$35,261	326
2011	3,976,440	1744	5,468,787	1,492,347	\$0.0831	\$124,080	1,058
2012	3,656,640	1559	4,888,670	1,232,030	\$0.0856	\$105,478	874
2013	3,889,880	1723	5,402,936	1,513,056	\$0.0953	\$144,255	1,073
2014	4,055,840	1700	5,330,813	1,274,973	\$0.0979	\$124,774	904
2015	4,035,180	1654	5,186,568	1,151,388	\$0.0808	\$93,051	816
2016	4,209,440	2077	6,513,000	2,303,560	\$0.0962	\$221,660	1,633
2017	4,562,880	2068	6,484,778	1,921,898	\$0.1072	\$206,065	1,363
2018	4,187,520	2230	6,992,773	2,805,253	\$0.1048	\$294,129	1,989
2019	4,083,840	2462	7,720,272	3,636,432	\$0.1070	\$389,016	2,578
2021	3,864,000	1957	6,136,707	2,272,707	\$0.1211	\$275,190	1,611
2022	3,734,400	1955	6,130,436	2,396,036	\$0.1344	\$322,002	1,699
2023	3,827,520	1975	6,193,151	2,365,631	\$0.1366	\$323,145	1,677
2024	3,791,040	1990	6,240,188	2,449,148	\$0.1484	\$363,394	1,736
Average				1,665,109	0.097	176,497	1,181
Total				34,967,290		\$3,706,437	24,792

Table E.2.4 below shows the detailed calculations of natural gas savings and equivalent greenhouse gas reduction at wastewater treatment plant.

Table E.2.4

Year	NIPSCO Natural Gas (Therm)	Cost (\$)	Cost (\$) Per Therm	Cost (\$) Based on 2008 Unit Price	Gas Usage Reduction (Therm)	Cost Savings (\$)	Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Metric Tons CO2)
2008	107399	\$96,981	\$0.903				
2009	79666	\$63,128	\$0.792	\$71,938.18	11,118	\$8,810	59
2010	75092	\$60,827	\$0.810	\$67,807.87	8,618	\$6,981	46
2011	80348	\$49,289	\$0.613	\$72,554.02	37,925	\$23,265	201
2012	83775	\$43,619	\$0.521	\$75,648.59	61,516	\$32,030	325
2013	59385	\$34,225	\$0.576	\$53,624.49	33,661	\$19,399	178
2014	69507	\$76,933	\$1.107	\$62,764.63	-12,801	-\$14,168	-68
2015	90397	\$50,853	\$0.563	\$81,628.24	54,706	\$30,775	289
2016	58211	\$27,368	\$0.470	\$52,564.37	53,592	\$25,196	284
2017	65170	\$37,348	\$0.573	\$58,848.33	37,517	\$21,500	198
2018	57781	\$31,101	\$0.538	\$52,175.68	39,153	\$21,075	207
2019	22676	\$11,184	\$0.493	\$20,476.66	18,841	\$9,292	100
2021	70594	\$43,574	\$0.617	\$63,746.46	32,682	\$20,173	173
2022	72566	\$62,160	\$0.857	\$65,526.69	3,931	\$3,367	21
2023	58239	\$42,652	\$0.732	\$52,589.22	13,569	\$9,938	72
2024	35217	\$19,804	\$0.562	\$31,800.79	21,334	\$11,997	113
AVG					27,691	\$15,309	146
Total					415,363	\$229,630	2,197

Introduction

In 1991, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) promulgated the Lead and Copper Rule under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) of 1974 in order to reduce the concentrations of lead and copper in drinking water as both substances posed a risk to public health. There have been a number of revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule (“LCR”) over the past 33 years.

On January 15, 2021, USEPA promulgated final rules and announced a proposed revision to the LCR known as the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (“LCRR”). On December 6, 2023, USEPA issued new proposed rules that would further revise the LCR and the LCRR that the agency has designated as the *Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI)*. The LCRI makes numerous revisions to the old rules in the hopes of making further reductions to concentrations of lead and copper in public drinking water supplies. The main provisions of this rule include changes to the LCRR’s requirements for conducting a service line inventory (referred to as the “baseline” inventory), developing a service line replacement plan, making service line replacements, and conducting service line related outreach. While the LCRI has not yet become final (and, as such, its new requirements are not binding), the LCRR nevertheless contains a “compliance date” for the baseline inventory of October 16, 2024.

The City’s water distribution system was established over 100 years ago. To comply with the original LCR, the LCRR and the proposed (but not final) LCRI, the City has been working for many years in identifying lead services on the “public” side and is working to inventory the material of all water service lines within our community.

Current Inventory Status

Water service lines are comprised of two ownership parts. Valparaiso City Services (VCS) has ownership of the water service from the main to the shutoff valve. This portion of the line is what VCS refers to as the “public” side. The water service from the shutoff valve into the building is privately owned. This portion of the line is what VCS refers to as the “private” side. Using existing building and utility records, the City was able to confirm or assume, with a reasonable degree of confidence, the materials used to construct nearly 98% of the service lines on the public side.

The City submitted an initial baseline inventory of all water service line materials to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) by the October 16, 2024, deadline with a degree of confidence as close as possible to 100% as required by the federal LCRI. Looking into 2025 and beyond, VCS will continue to investigate the “private” service line materials in our community to improve the inventory. Following the inventory, all customers with a service line made of lead or an unknown material were notified via postcards by the required November 15, 2024, date. These notifications will go out on an annual basis as we continue our inventory and replacement efforts.

Process and Education

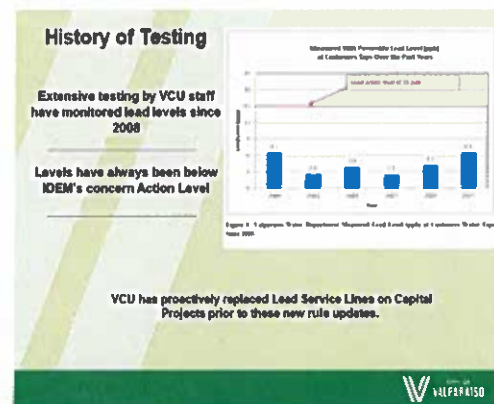
At public meetings, such as at the VCU Board of Director Meetings, City Council meetings and Neighborhood Workshops, VCS staff presented to stakeholders the new LCRI requirements which are currently focused on water service line material documentation. This documentation is being gathered by scheduled inspections conducted by VCS staff or residents self-reporting to the lead-safe website. VCS staff have worked alongside the City’s Community Engagement Department to present directly to community representatives to promote participation in collecting water service line information. Despite submitting an initial baseline, VCS will continue to gather service line information to improve our inventory. Customers are encouraged to self-report their service line material, if they have not already done so.

Summary of Public Meetings

1. City Council Meeting and Public Presentation: **January 22, 2024**. Original presentation of LCRI Updates.
2. Valparaiso City Utilities (VCU) Board of Directors and Public Presentation (LCRI Updates): **January 23, 2024**.
3. Public Neighborhood Workshop (LCRI Updates): **January 30, 2024**.
4. VCU Grant Application Process: **February 13, 2024**, Meeting, Application for \$300k for Type 3 Funding for Inventory purposes.
5. VCU Grant Award Acceptance: **May 28, 2024**. Requested to Accept the grant of \$150k for Inventory Process (marketing materials, door knocking, and potholing).
6. VCU Board of Directors Public Presentation, Door Knocking: **August 13, 2024**: Explanation of Door Knocking Campaign.
7. City Council Public Presentation: **August 26, 2024**: Explanation of Door Knocking Campaign.

What We Know

In the older sections of our City, it is common for water service line pipes to be made of galvanized steel or lead. Since 1992, VCS staff have conducted periodic targeted sampling of residences to assess potential lead levels in drinking water at the tap. Thus far, detectable lead levels within our community have remained well below mandatory reporting requirements set by the USEPA and IDEM of 15 parts per billion (“ppb”) and USEPA’s proposed new action level of 10 ppb. Even though we believe water utility risk for water-related lead exposure to be low based this testing, the City will continue working towards reducing the potential risks for our customers. A history of sampling and testing by VCS staff within the community for lead concentrations levels from 2008 through 2023 are shown in the table.



Current and Future Financing

VCS started working in April 2023 with a consultant to meet the requirements of the LCRI. As of today, VCS has received grant funding from the Indiana Finance Authority (IFA) for the early stages of the LCRI in the amount of \$195,000. Out of the nearly 500 community systems in Indiana, VCS was one of only 40 communities in Indiana to apply and receive this funding. During these past months, the City along with its consultant, have explored all the available opportunities to continue updating and completing the lead service line inventory. The funds that were received have helped to support our tasks in compliance with the new LCRI such as:

1. **Standardized Geographic Information System (GIS) data** and reviewed all available records to provide IDEM with the most accurate service line material information.
2. **Created a Project Delivery Site (ArcGIS Online Platform)** to host the GIS applications and tools to continue the drinking water line inventories and associated data.



Lead Inventory Program
City of Valparaiso, Indiana
Fact Sheet –September 2024
Updated as of April 2025

3. **The production of public outreach materials** such as door hangers, mailers and utility bill inserts to encourage public participation in the program.
4. **Generated a dynamic public outreach website** known as the Lead Safe Valparaiso Hub Site designed to educate the public about the program and collect self-reporting survey contributions to help the inventories as shown:

Past and Current Funding Initiatives

1. **Type I Funding: \$25,000** - Utility Records Review and Analysis. Awarded by IFA June 16, 2023.
2. **Type II Funding: \$20,000** - Utility Records Review and Analysis. Awarded by IFA June 16, 2023.
3. **Type III Funding: \$150,000** - Inventory Purposes. Awarded by IFA May 16, 2024.
4. **Indiana Finance Authority - State Revolving Fund Application** – Due April of 2026

Next Steps as of 2025 and Beyond

The next step of this process is to gather information and outline the strategies for future replacement. Our approach is to:

- Develop a capital plan to coordinate lead service replacement lines with other capital projects such as road paving and water main replacements. Preparing for lead service line replacements and the requirement for full-service line replacements pose difficulties. Utility providers are presented with the challenge of coordinating these important, yet costly replacements. Coordinating replacements with other capital projects appears to be the most economical path to replacement. This approach will stretch pay as you go funds and ensure that service line replacement costs are equitably shared by the rate payers. VCS is actively developing a plan to incorporate projects such as paving, water main replacements, etc. into a holistic capital improvement plan.
- Continue to comply with IDEM's LCRI and LCRR. This includes yearly notification to all residents with lead or unknown service line material.
- Start Valparaiso's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) application process with the Indiana Finance Authority that is due no later than April of 2026 that will request funds for future lead line inventory replacement. This funding may provide grants and/or 0% interest loans to the community if Valparaiso qualifies. Please be aware that a good portion of the grant funding is allocated to disadvantaged communities.

Website Link: <https://leadsafe-valpo-gisvalpo.hub.arcgis.com>

END OF DOCUMENT



STRATEGIC PLAN 3RD EDITION 2025 – 2029

Prepared by: Valparaiso City Services
March 2025

Executive Director's Message

As the Valparaiso City Services embarks on a new chapter with this 3rd Edition of our Strategic Plan, I am filled with optimism and excitement for the future of our organization. This plan is not just another document. It is a roadmap of our collective vision, shared values and a blueprint on how we will achieve our future goals. I am confident that we will successfully complete the stated goals within this plan as another series of major accomplishments.

Public works and utility services are essential for a community's stability, growth, health and safety. These services have been provided to the City of Valparaiso in various administrative arrangements for over 100 years. Even though we, now as Valparaiso City Services, have a proven track record in leveraging our talents and strengths with the right attitude in providing our community with these fundamental services, there have been many challenges to overcome along the way. Most recently, the pandemic tested our resolve and fortitude to continually provide these services without pause as those unprecedented years were a strong reminder of the importance of having strategic and operational goals in place. To continue delivering these vital services and infrastructure improvements in a more efficient manner, our leadership team began a third strategic planning process in early 2024. As with our past strategic plans, this process included a review of all facets of our organization and the consideration of the many questions currently facing our industry. This review came with a specific timeline for what we want to accomplish from 2025 through the end of 2029.

In the public services industry, legacy issues such as managing aging infrastructure like roads and water/wastewater treatment systems, the federal mandate of lead pipe replacement for drinking water, emerging contaminants, financing for capital improvements, long term water supply availability, succession planning, financial health, implementation of new technology, additional regulatory concerns and the future of recycling are all well known. Since we are now encountering some of these same demands, they are the main showpieces that have been outlined within our new plan. We feel the plan's 20 strategic goals builds upon the solid foundation already established for our organization so that we can provide an even higher level of service to the City of Valparaiso well into the future.

I want to thank Mayor Jon Costas, the City's Administration, the City's Common Council and the Valparaiso City Utilities Board of Directors for providing their leadership, attitude, commitment and the resources needed for us to carry on from day to day. I also want to thank all of our personnel within Valparaiso City Services for they are continually recognized as industry leaders and will be implementing our new plan.

Steve C. Poulos
Executive Director
Valparaiso City Services
March 2025

About Valparaiso City Services

In 2004, a new organizational structure for the City of Valparaiso (City) was put into place in order to streamline City government. This new structure included integrating the Department of Water Works and the Water Reclamation Department into a combined City-wide utility. This new utility organization became known as the Valparaiso City Utilities (VCU). Management of the City's stormwater assets was added to the VCU's responsibilities in 2009.

In 2020, a second reorganization for the City occurred with the operational integration of VCU and the City's Public Works Department. This recently created service organization became known as the Valparaiso City Services (VCS). The purpose for this second reorganization was to improve City-wide operational efficiencies for our community.

Today, the VCS provides full water/wastewater/stormwater utility and public works services to the City of Valparaiso, drinking water supply and wastewater treatment to the Valparaiso Lakes Area Conservancy District, drinking water supply to the Aberdeen community and sanitary sewer maintenance service to the Damon Run Conservancy District. The VCS now serves a population of about 42,000.

The VCS is governed by the VCU's Board of Directors and the City's Board of Public Works and Safety. There are 120 employees within VCS whose areas of operation and management now includes customer service, finance, business operations, health and safety, project management, fleet maintenance, trash removal, recycling efforts, leaf and brush collection services, street maintenance, snow removal, stormwater management, water conservation, water distribution, water treatment, wastewater collections, water reclamation and regulatory compliance. The City's Engineering and Human Resource Departments provides assistance to the VCS on related municipal projects and human resource administration respectively.

The essential management activities for today's VCS leadership team are to provide a vibrant work place for our employees; maintain operational, financial and regulatory excellence; perform periodic strategic planning towards improving our organization's future service; to monitor our progress in accomplishing the strategic and operational goals we set out for completion and to communicate VCS's direction to our customers as a part of our continuing commitment to transparency in all of our activities.

The VCS leadership team's new *Mission Statement* to our community and our customers which serves as the main objective in all of our operations and planning is:

The Mission of the Valparaiso City Services is to continually provide our community and customers with comprehensive public works and utility services in an exceptionally reliable, cost effective, safe and responsible manner.

In monitoring our progress in achieving our planning goals since 2004, VCU and now VCS have experienced many accomplishments. Most of these accomplishments have been operational in nature and/or facility upgrades which have been designed to improve the quality of life for our community's residents and customers. Some of the main accomplishments of our organization from 2004 through 2024 are shown in the following tables:

Valparaiso City Utilities and Valparaiso City Services Major Accomplishments 2004 to 2019

Major Accomplishment Description
Valparaiso City Utilities (VCU) formally begins operations in 2004
Stormwater Management added to VCU responsibilities in 2009
1 st Edition of VCU Strategic Plan in 2010
Water Focus Group/Water Source Study/Water Source Recommendation in 2013
Chataqua Park Stormwater Detention Pond and Reclassification - \$12.0 million
Vale Park Road and LaPorte Avenue Water Main Construction – \$0.5 million
Elden Kuehl PCF (EKPCF) Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Basin Upgrades - \$2.6 million
VCU Business Office Reorganization - Phase I and Phase II
Wastewater Collections and Water Distribution (C&D) integration/VCU Customer Service Audit
RDA Grant for Horseprairie Sanitary Wastewater Lift Station Upgrades - \$0.2 million
VCU Bond Refinancing for Water (WD) and Water Reclamation (WRD) Departments - \$1.0 million
Water and Sewer Rate Cases and Bond Issues in 2013
WD Water Well and WRD Headworks Projects - \$22.0 million
Guaranteed Savings Process for VCU Facilities Construction Projects
US Army Corps of Engineers Sewer Lining Project Grant - \$1.0 million
New Public Works and Utilities Campus/City and VCU Vehicle Maintenance Integration
VCU Fluoride Commission Action Plan in 2014
WD Water Well and WRD Headworks Projects - \$2.6 million
Guaranteed Savings Process for VCU Facilities Construction Projects
Pratt Industries (Paper Recycling Mill) - \$260 million
EKPCF Ultraviolet Disinfection Project - \$2.0 million
VCU Bond Refinancing - \$1.5 million
2 nd Edition of VCU Strategic Plan in 2017
Stormwater Master Plan/User Rates/Bond Issue - 2017 to 2019
Beauty Creek Watershed Project
Acquisition of Damon Run Conservancy District Sewer Assets in 2019
Utilities Master Plan and Aging Infrastructure Program - 2017 to 2022

**Valparaiso City Utilities and Valparaiso City Services
Major Accomplishments
2020 to 2024**

Major Accomplishment Description
VCU Cash Reserves Policy, Lockbox Program and Customer Billing Audit - \$0.24 million savings/year
Valparaiso City Services (VCS) formally begins operations in 2020
VCS Customer Service Consolidation of Public Works and Utilities Divisions in 2021
WD Phase II Water Production Wells and Bond Anticipation Note in 2022 - \$6.0 million
VCS Public Works Recycling Committee - 2021 to 2022
VCS Public Works Solid Waste and Recycling Rate Case in 2022
VCS Operational Integration of Public Works and Utilities Divisions completed in 2023
Solar Project in 2023 - \$0.10 million in yearly savings
VCS Management Reorganization Phase II completed in 2024
Lead-Safe Inventory Program for Water Service Lines in 2024
VCS Rate Case and Bond Issue in 2024 - \$80.0 million
Damon Run Conservancy District Rate Case in 2024
3 rd Edition of VCS Strategic Plan – Leadership Meetings in 2024

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning and defined goals are used by an organization's leadership to improve performance by assessing the existing state of the organization's operations and to subsequently provide a plan for high level actions and priorities over a defined length of time. Strategic plans are ambitious with a timeline usually between a three-to-five-year span. VCU, and now VCS, have been strategic planning since 2009. In support of strategic planning, operational planning is used to specify the day-to-day functional activities of the organization. Operational plans are procedural in nature and have a short timeline of no more than one year.

To begin the planning process for this 3rd Edition of our Strategic Plan, the VCS leadership team first met on February 8, 2024 in order to conduct a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis or SWOT of our organization. A SWOT Analysis is used as a framework to develop a strategic plan. This type of assessment examines both external and internal factors as well as current and future possibilities. The findings of the SWOT Analysis were presented for review and comment. The results of this analysis are shown in the table below:

SWOT Analysis 2024

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal	Skilled, Knowledgeable Employees Employee Teamwork/Flexibility Flexibility/Adaptive Financial Health Technology Planning High Productivity Response Time Quality of Work Customer Service – both Internal/External Regulatory Compliance Stable Infrastructure Frugally Innovative Strong Leadership Team Communication/Inter-Departmental Cooperation	Aging Infrastructure/Equipment Project Additions – to many at one time Succession Planning Inflation/Commodity Pricing Increases Workload vs. Labor Force Communication Process Efficiencies Technology Complacency Supply Chain Difficulties Employee Turnover Job Advancement
	Opportunities	Threats
External	Cross-Training Improved Public Relations Community Partnerships – Interns (HS & VU) Merging of Departments/Tasks Collaboration with Engineering Department Improved Employment Screening Retention of Employees Creating New Positions Funding Sources/Grants Training Cost Reductions via Operational Efficiencies	Social Media/Gossip/Morale Cyber Security Inflation Supply Chain Difficulties Weather/Drought/Water Conservation Reactive Mindsets Aging Infrastructure Growth Backflow/Groundwater Contamination Change in Political Climate Sale of Utility Lack of Qualified/Skilled Labor Time Theft/Employee Performance Succession Planning/Employee Burn Out Emergency Response

As can be seen in the table, VCS has many internal strengths and external opportunities that provide a sound basis for VCS's future activities. At the same time, VCS faces various internal weaknesses and external threats that are common to most utility providers across the country. The identification of the internal and external factors facing VCS was critical at the onset of our strategic planning process.

A second leadership meeting was held on October 9, 2024 which examined the history of the VCU and the VCS; the past accomplishments of both the VCU and VCS were presented; the existing work-related culture at VCS was discussed and the current status of the 28 defined strategic goals within the 2nd Edition of our Strategic Plan (2018-2022) were assessed by the leadership team.

Over the past five years, VCU and VCS have been able to achieve and complete 17 of the 28 defined strategic goals with five goals being carried over to our new plan. The reasons for the remaining six goals from the prior plan not being accomplished were due to the continual changes in VCU's prioritization of the plan's goals with other organizational projects that became an essential concern. These concerns included the operational merging of VCU and the City's Public Works Department to form the VCS in 2020. Based upon the rapidly changing departmental/divisional, financial, technological and regulatory conditions with which we deliver services to our customers, different goals within the plan became more important and a priority to both the VCU and now to VCS.

A third leadership meeting was held on October 16, 2024 where new mission statements for the VCS were presented for potential inclusion within our new plan. The development of plan objectives and divisional goals were further discussed as they related to the SWOT analysis. The plan's strategic goals mirror our new Mission Statement in that VCS's primary objective is to provide superior municipal services while enhancing the quality of life for our community. As in our past plans, the outline for the development for each of the individual strategic goals within the new plan is shown below:

Strategic Goal Outline

1. Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)
Identifies the tasks or activities required in achieving the goal.
2. Timeline
The new plan proposed by the VCS is in a five-year time frame to meet the identified goal at the end of 2029. Milestone dates are included within each goal.
3. Resources Needed
Determines the personnel and financial resources needed to complete the goal.
 - a. Human Resources
 - i. VCS Personnel
 - ii. Outside Resources
 - b. Financial Resources
 - i. Cost/Benefit Analysis
 - ii. Capital Investment/Funding
 - iii. Engineering
 - iv. Training
4. Intangibles
Provides a description of the potential actions necessary to resolve an unperceived circumstance or event in order to achieve the stated goal.

A fourth and final leadership meeting was held on December 6, 2024 that incorporated additional comments from each of the VCS's Divisions before the plan's completion. This 3rd Edition of our Strategic Plan contains **20 strategic goals** that we will be completing by the end of 2029. The main **operational goals** for each of VCS's Divisions which have a short time line or are conducted on a daily basis are also presented as they provide support to our strategic goals. The purpose for the inclusion of both types of goals within this plan are to communicate our future direction over the next five years and our methods towards improving our organization's day-to-day operations. This is part of our continuing commitment to be transparent in all of our activities.

Administration

The administration of operational and strategic planning activities for the VCS is through our leadership/management team. The operational integration between VCU and the City's Public Works Department was completed in 2023 and established the VCS in its current form. This merger necessitated a management reorganization of VCS with Phase II of this process being finalized in April of 2024.

The eminent **operational goals** for the administration and management of the VCS in support of the defined strategic goals are to provide for a healthy, safe and vibrant work place for our employees, support employee training as necessary, continue world class services to our customers, remain fiscally sound, maintain operational excellence including regulatory compliance and to keep our organization strong and viable well into the future

The VCS leadership team's **strategic goals** for completion at the end of 2029 are the following:

Goal #1 - VCS Succession Planning

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Continue to identify key positions in each Division.
2. Develop staff to fill the key positions.
3. Train and educate staff for employee licensure, certification and/or degree attainment as necessary.

Timeline

Development and implementation of a VCS Employee Succession Plan by June 30, 2025.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources
 - a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management, VCS Staff and the VCU Board of Directors.
 - b. Outside Resources:
Reference materials and specialized training as needed.
2. Financial Resources
 - a. Cost/Benefit Analysis:
Succession planning costs for the program will be incidental in that efforts are made to use existing budgets and personnel adjustments to place individuals in positions that will be conducive to their professional development.
 - b. Capital Investment/Funding:
VCS dedicated training budget.

Intangibles

Preparing a succession plan for future staff conditions is critical to the continued operational and strategic viability of the VCS.

Goal #2 - VCS Employee Retainage

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Proactive and interactive management.
2. Mentoring and elevated training of VCS Staff.
3. Maintaining a positive work environment.
4. Updating VCS Salary Study every three (3) years.

Timeline

Continuous.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources
 - a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management, all VCS employees and the VCU Board of Directors.
 - b. Outside Resources:
Educational classes, professional seminars and conventions, vendor training and the City's Board of Public Works and Safety as needed.
2. Financial Resources
 - a. Cost/Benefit Analysis:
Succession planning costs for the program will be incidental in that efforts are made to use existing budgets and personnel adjustments to place individuals in positions that will be conducive to their professional development.
 - b. Capital Investment/Funding:
VCS dedicated training budget and VCS Divisional operations budgets.

Intangibles

Retainage of staff keeps employee morale at a high level, minimization of the cost of retraining and a decrease in operational disruptions.

Customer Service

The Customer Service Center of the VCS is committed to providing world class service to our customers and our community. The service center is located at 205 Billings Street within the City of Valparaiso and serves a population of approximately 42,000. The VCS Customer Service Center is currently staffed with eight full-time employees serving as the primary point of contact for water, wastewater, stormwater and trash/leaf collection functions. Some of the activities performed by the VCS Customer Service Center are to start/stop accounts, account transfers, answering questions about customer accounts, initiating service requests to all VCS Divisions in response to complaints or concerns, bill collections/processing and to provide a means for follow-up to service requests.

The foremost **operational goals** for the Customer Service Center in support of the defined strategic goal are to continue to provide a positive customer experience, decrease response times to customer complaints and service requests, provide service-oriented training to Departmental Staff and to improve customer service capabilities by upgrading the Incode Payment System to signature software for the acceptance of customer payments and completing agreements via telephone.

The Customer Service Center's **strategic goal** for completion at the end of 2029 is the following:

Goal - Completely Paperless between Customer Service and Public Works Divisions

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. To improve operating efficiency and customer service.
2. Improve communications between Divisions.
3. Make all internal forms, including service orders, fully assessable online.

Timeline

Training for all VCS Staff on mobile service orders by June 30, 2025.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources
 - a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management, VCS Customer Service Staff and the VCU Board of Directors.
 - b. Outside Personnel:
City's Information Technology (IT) Director and a Mobile Service Order vendor representative as needed.
2. Financial Resources
 - a. Cost/Benefit Analysis:
Decreases the costs of paper/ink/supplies along with reducing processing time by VCS Staff.
 - b. Training:
VCS Customer Service Staff training as needed.

Intangibles

Streamline Customer Service and Public Works processes in order to aid in preventing errors and potential delays of services.

Business Operations

The Business Operations of the VCS includes the Finance Office which is responsible for the overall internal and external budgeting such as the reporting of VCU payroll, billing, accounts payable and accounts receivable. This includes complying with financial regulations issued by the State of Indiana's Board of Accounts (SBOA). The VCS Business Operations is located at 205 Billings Street in the City of Valparaiso and is staffed with four full-time employees consisting of a Chief Financial Officer, Billing Coordinator, Billing/Accounts Payable Coordinator and a Payroll/Accounts Payable Coordinator. Currently, Business Operations is overseeing a VCU Operating Budget of \$15.7 million for fiscal year 2024 and a VCU Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the fiscal years 2025 thru 2029 of \$20.7 million.

The major **operational goals** for the Business Operations in support of the defined strategic goal are to upgrade current Incode financial software to Version 10, renovate the current chart of accounts, provide on-going training to Finance Office Staff on new financial management software and to maintain %100 adherence with the financial rules and regulations required by the SBOA.

The Business Operations' **strategic goal** for completion at the end of 2029 is the following:

Goal - Implement Tyler Content Manager Software

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Purchase Tyler Content Manager module to scan all purchase orders and supporting financial documents in order to save them electronically.
2. Purchase of an electronic scanner.
3. Begin scanning of financial documents.

Timeline

1. Budget for software and equipment costs through VCU operating and CIP budgets in early 2025.
2. Training of Finance Office Staff on new software by July 1, 2025.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources
 - a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management, VCS Finance Office, VCS Customer Service Staff and the VCU Board of Directors.
 - b. Outside Resources:
City's IT Director, Tyler Technologies and Baker Tilly US, LLP.
2. Financial Resources
 - a. Cost/Benefit Analysis:
Reduction in VCS overall costs for financial document handling and improvement in Financial Office efficiencies by implementing new module for scanning of all VCU purchase orders and supporting financial documents in order to save them electronically.

- b. Capital Investment/Funding:
Costs associated with the purchase of new software, scanning equipment and consultant fees.
- c. Training:
Finance Office Staff training on new software.

Intangibles

Ease of financial document retrieval by electronic methods for VCU operational, capital improvement and strategic planning along with annual audit reporting to the SBOA.

Engineering

The Engineering Department of the City of Valparaiso provides engineering expertise and assistance to the VCS which directly affects the lives of the City's residents both today and in the future. Some of those services include stormwater management, project management and administration, infrastructure design, proposed project plan reviews and approvals, providing municipal specifications for economic development and field inspection activities. The Department primarily interacts with VCS Administration, VCS Project Management, the Public Works Division and the Field Services Division for VCS's planned infrastructure projects such as for roads, sidewalks, storm sewers, sanitary sewers and drinking water pipelines.

The leading **operational goals** for the Engineering Department in support of the defined strategic goals include identifying threats to VCS's collection and drinking water systems, creating standard operating procedures for defining Departmental roles and responsibilities, updating current stormwater technical standards, integrating the Stormwater Complaint System with VCS, providing training opportunities for Engineering Staff on new methods and technologies and to be in 100% compliance with all federal, state and local specifications, rules and environmental regulations.

The City Engineering Department's **strategic goals** for VCS that are to be completed at the end of 2029 include the following:

Goal #1 - Implement Long Term Strategies Across VCS Divisions

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Generate a new City Aging Infrastructure Master Plan for storm sewers, sanitary sewers, water pipelines, road paving and sidewalks including known water service lines that need replacement as a part of the City's Lead Service Line Inventory.
2. Consider the creation of a Utility Advisory Committee composed of representatives from the VCS, the City and local utilities such as the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) and telecommunications companies in order to better coordinate City and VCS infrastructure projects over the next 20 years.
3. Aid in the development of an overall VCS Capital Improvement Master Plan for storm sewers, sanitary sewers, water pipelines, road paving, and sidewalks.
4. Utilization of the State of Indiana's Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) system, current sidewalk ratings, the City's Stormwater Master Plan and VCS's CIP.

Timeline

Generate a Utility Master Plan which identifies roads, sidewalks and potential stormwater improvements along with coordinating and integrating this information with the current VCS CIP by December 31, 2026.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources
 - a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management, VCS Staff and the VCU Board of Directors.
 - b. Outside Resources:
City's Engineering Department, engineering consultants and the City's Board of Public Works and Safety as needed.

2. Financial Resources

- a. **Cost/Benefit Analysis:**
Devising these types of plans and combining projects will reduce VCS's overall costs for projects, contractors, restoration efforts and damage to existing infrastructure.
- b. **Capital Investment/Funding:**
Estimated cost of \$75,000 to utilize outside engineering consultants to assist in creating the Utility Master Plan including GIS mapping of assets. Other associated costs for time and activities in identifying projects by Department Staff.
- c. **Engineering:**
City's Engineering Department and engineering consultants as needed.
- d. **Training:**
Continuing education on new methods and technologies.

Intangibles

Ease of staff planning between VCS and the City's Engineering Department from year to year with the goal of reducing VCS's overall costs for projects, contractors, restoration efforts and damage to existing infrastructure.

Goal #2 - Update Stormwater Master Plan

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Utilize known problem areas, new complaint mapping information and outside engineering consulting services to generate an updated Stormwater Master Plan.
2. Identification of new stormwater projects, potential threats to the stormwater collection system, areas within the City where lower release rates may be needed due to lack of or aged infrastructure and soil conditions as they relate to mapped complaints.

Timeline

Development and completion of an updated Stormwater Master Plan by December 31, 2026.

Resources Needed

1. **Human Resources**
 - a. **VCS Personnel:**
Senior Management, VCS Project Management Staff, VCS Staff and the VCS Board of Directors.
 - b. **Outside Resources:**
City's Engineering Department, engineering consultants, City's IT Director and the City's Board of Public Works and Safety as needed.

2. Financial Resources

- a. Cost/Benefit Analysis:
Revised Stormwater Master Plan will aid in using stormwater rate payer's fees in the proper and most critical locations within the City.
- b. Capital Investment/Funding:
Estimated costs of approximately \$250,000 for consulting services.
- c. Engineering:
City's Engineering Department and selected engineering consultants as needed.
- d. Training:
Future training on modernized GIS mapping software and road design as it affects overall stormwater drainage.

Intangibles

Revising and updating the current Stormwater Master Plan will provide improvement to the quality of life for the community, potentially aid in the reduction of surface flooding, identify critical infrastructure replacement, indicate maintenance needs and threats to the City's stormwater system, add potential stormwater projects to the current list and identify areas within the City of known stormwater drainage issues.

Public Works

The Public Works Division (PWD) of VCS maintains over 170 miles of roadways, 35 miles of pathways/bike trails and an extensive sidewalk system as well as delivering quality trash, recycle, leaf and brush collection services within the City. The PWD also performs such public amenities as cemetery landscaping, tree removal, arborist expertise and sign painting within the City along with the maintenance on the vehicle fleet for the VCS and the City.

The central **operational goals** for the Public Works Division in support of the defined strategic goals include continuing to effectively provide road/pathways/sidewalk maintenance as well as quality collection services within the City, to provide on-going training to PWD Staff on new technological advancements, access to the City's Keystone System for payroll and invoices, instituting changes to the Division's current Call Back Policy (Differential) for overtime and personnel time off calculations and to maintain 100% compliance with all federal, state and local specifications, rules and environmental regulations.

The Public Works Division's **strategic goals** for completion by the end of 2029 include the following:

Goal #1 - Recycling Future

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Review current recycling operations to determine future of program.
2. Evaluate options including dual stream recycling with Pratt Industries including drop off centers.
3. Develop plan to increase efficiencies, lessen redundancies and provide quality control of services.

Timeline

Provide recommendation by December 31, 2025.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources
 - a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management and PWD Staff.
 - b. Outside Resources:
Engineering consultant and the City's Board of Public Works and Safety as needed.
2. Financial Resources
 - a. Cost/Benefit Analysis:
Increase operational efficiencies and production in preparation for the future residential and economic growth of the City.
 - b. Capital Investment/Funding:
Consultant fees.
 - c. Engineering:
Selected engineering consultant as needed.

- d. Training:
Future training of PWD Staff on new routes.

Intangibles

The future of recycling within the VCS service area may reduce the PWD's costs and improve operational efficiencies

Goal #2 - Route Improvements

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Utilize Abonmarche's Technology Strategic Plan to implement recommended Geographic Information System (GIS), Work Management System (WMS) and computer server upgrades in order to consolidate software where possible for the elimination of redundancies and improve overall efficiencies.
2. Review and optimize current trash/recycling/waste pickup and snow removal/salt application routes to develop and implement an overall route plan. This will enable PWD to streamline processes, increase efficiencies, lessen redundancies and provide quality control of services.

Timeline

1. Integrate and utilize the City's Samsara GPS-AVL software with local weather stations and cameras by December 31, 2027.
2. Deploy and configure ArcGIS Winter Weather Operations Solutions for public updates including maps and applications that shows near real-time information such as progress and response times by December 31, 2027.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources
 - a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management, GIS/WMS Staff and PWD Staff.
 - b. Outside Resources:
Engineering consultant, computer consultants and the City's Board of Public Works and Safety as needed.
2. Financial Resources
 - a. Cost/Benefit Analysis:
Increase operational efficiencies and production in preparation for the future residential and economic growth of the City.
 - b. Capital Investment/Funding:
Consultant fees.
 - d. Engineering:
Selected engineering consultant as needed.

- e. Training:
Future training of PWD Staff on new routes.

Intangibles

The elimination of redundancies, improvement in overall efficiencies and the optimization of current trash and waste pickup routes within the VCS service area will reduce the PWD's costs and improve operational efficiencies.

Goal #3 - Optimize Technological Resources

Strategies (Tasks or Activities)

1. Utilize Abonmarche's Technology Strategic Plan to implement recommended GIS, WMS and server upgrades in order to consolidate software where possible for the elimination of redundancies and improve overall efficiency.
2. Consolidate Fleet Management and Asset/Work Management systems into one program to simplify user experience and avoid repetitive data entry tasks. This will enable PWD staff to complete all work orders using upgraded mobile devices, eliminating paperwork and adopting a fully digital workflow.
3. Review and optimize current trash/recycling/waste pickup and snow removal/salt application routes to develop and implement a route plan. This will enable PWD to streamline processes, increase efficiencies, lessen redundancies and improve quality control of services.

Timeline

1. Implement new asset/work management system (EAM/WMS) software, consolidating Fleet Maintenance software functionality, and complete training for PWD staff by 2026.
2. Purchase computer field tablets and complete training for PWD staff by 2026.
3. Integrate fuel system software with new EAM/WMS program by 2026.
4. Deploy and configure Portal for ArcGIS to fully utilize ArcGIS Enterprise licenses/tools by 2027.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources
 - a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management, GIS/WMS Staff and PWD Staff
 - b. Outside Resources:
City IT Director, Engineering consultant and the City's Board of Public Works and Safety as needed.
2. Financial Resources
 - a. Cost/Benefit Analysis:
Increase operational efficiencies and production in preparation for the future residential and economic growth of the City.
 - b. Capital Investment/Funding:
Consultant fees for software deployment and configuration. Vendor fees for new asset/work management system implementation.

- c. Engineering:
Selected engineering consultant as needed
- d. Training:
Future training of PWD Staff on new routes.

Intangibles

Implementation of recommended elements in Abonmarche's Technology Strategic Plan will ensure VCS software systems are being operated and maintained properly and safely so that our generated data is formatted correctly while eliminating software duplications or inefficiencies. Elimination of paper work orders and service orders by moving to computer field tablets will allow for real-time updates of workflow and asset management.

Goal #4 - Business Case for Electric and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Fleet

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Investigate the opportunity of utilizing electric and/or CNG.
2. Target rolling stock that is well suited for electric and proven for CNG
3. Investigate strategically locating electric and CNG stations within the VCS or the City.

Timeline

Provide a Business Case for electric and compressed natural gas fleet conversion by the end of 2026

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources
 - a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management and PWD Staff.
 - b. Outside Resources:
Engineering consultant and the City's Board of Public Works and Safety as needed.
2. Financial Resources
 - a. Cost/Benefit Analysis:
Increase operational efficiencies and production in preparation for the future residential and economic growth of the City. Understand the capital expenditures required and operational needs for these types of fleets versus traditional fuel (gas and diesel) operations.
 - b. Capital Investment/Funding:
Consultant fees. Work with Clean Cities for grant opportunities.
 - c. Engineering:
Selected engineering consultant as needed.
 - d. Training:
Future training of PWD Staff on new equipment.

Intangibles

The results of the Business Case for electric and compressed natural gas fleet conversion may prove the VCS will reduce energy costs, improve operational efficiencies and greenhouse gas emissions.

Field Services

The Field Services Division (FSD) of VCS maintains over 320 miles of sanitary sewers, sanitary force mains, stormwater mains and combination sewers along with low-pressure sanitary sewer force mains, sanitary/combination sewer manholes and stormwater inlets, catch basins, 5,000 manholes and standpipes throughout the service area of the VCS which includes the City and the Damon Run Conservancy District. The Division further maintains approximately 250 miles of water distribution pipeline, 1,800 fire hydrants and 4,000 water system valves within our service area along with conducting water leak surveys, new construction of water meter sets and project management for VCS.

The prominent **operational goals** for the Field Services Division in support of the defined strategic goals include the continuation of effectively maintaining all water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure throughout VCS's service area, to provide on-going training to FSD Staff on new infrastructure management software, improve water meter efficiencies and to be in 100% compliance with all federal, state and local specifications, rules and environmental regulations.

The Field Services Division's **strategic goals** for completion by the end 2029 include the following:

Goal #1 - Update Aging Water Distribution Infrastructure Replacement Plan

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Contract with an engineering consulting firm to review and update VCS's existing CIP as prepared by McMahon and Associates and VCS staff.
2. Develop a VCS CIP specific for replacing inoperable or mechanically damaged hydrants and water valves within VCS's water distribution system.
3. Coordinate VCS capital replacement projects for water distribution with City roadway and sidewalk projects.
4. Coordinate VCS Lead Water Service Line Replacement Plan with the VCS CIP.

Timeline

1. Complete a review and update of existing VCS CIP and modernize VCS Water Aging Infrastructure Project List in 2026.
2. Complete VCS CIP for hydrant and water valve replacement in 2026.
3. Create stakeholder committee and host monthly meetings with VCS and City Staff to coordinate capital project efforts starting in 2025 through 2029.
4. Replacement of VCS water distribution infrastructure dependent on annual budget and coordination with other City capital projects from 2025 through 2029.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources
 - a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management, VCS Project Manager, FSD Staff, Public Works Division Staff and the VCU Board of Directors.
 - b. Outside Resources:
The City's Engineering and IT Departments, service contractors/vendors, engineering consultant(s) and the City's Board of Public Works and Safety as needed.

2. Financial Resources

- a. **Cost/Benefit Analysis:**
Construction cost savings combining VCS capital projects with City projects including VCS lead water service line replacement.
- b. **Capital Investment/Funding:**
Funding at an estimated \$650,000 to \$1,000,000 per year from the VCS CIP, \$50,000 to \$100,000 for engineering consultant fees through 2029. Federal, state and local funding as feasible.
- c. **Engineering:**
City Engineering Department and other engineering consultant(s) as needed.

Intangibles

Coordination of capital projects reduces potential damage to the quality of existing infrastructure and allows for complete reconstruction of City assets during projects. Replacing VCS water main valves will improve isolation of VCS water mains which in turn reduces the footprint of shut down areas during main breaks or other disruptions of VCS's water service.

Goal #2 - Update Aging Sewer Infrastructure Replacement Plan

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Contract with an engineering consulting firm to review the VCS's existing Sewer Aging Infrastructure Project List and create a VCS CIP for sanitary sewers.
2. Focus more on Cured in Place Piping (CIPP) for sewer relining opportunities where feasible.
3. Perform manhole rehabilitation projects at a higher frequency to increase longevity of existing manholes.
4. Purchase or utilize existing software necessary to link FSD television truck to WMS and GIS.
5. Re-televise and clean all sanitary sewer mains within VCS service area by 2029.
6. Coordinate VCS sanitary sewer capital replacement projects with City roadway and sidewalk projects.

Timeline

1. Complete review of existing VCS Sewer Aging Infrastructure Project List and develop a VCS CIP for the sanitary sewer system by the end of 2026.
2. Re-televise and clean all sanitary sewer mains within VCS service area by 2029.
3. Integrate VCS television truck with WMS and GIS by 2026.
4. Create stakeholder committee and host monthly meetings with VCS and City Staff to coordinate capital project efforts starting in 2025 through 2029.
5. Replacement of VCS infrastructure dependent on annual budget and coordination with other City capital projects from 2025 through 2029.

Resources Needed

1. **Human Resources**
 - a. **VCS Personnel:**
Senior Management, VCS Project Manager, FSD Staff, Public Works Division Staff and the VCU Board of Directors.

- b. Outside Resources:
The City's Engineering Department, engineering consultant(s) and the City's Board of Public Works and Safety.

2. Financial Resources

- a. Cost/Benefit Analysis:
Construction cost savings in combining VCS capital projects with City projects and in utilizing CIPP lining and manhole rehabilitation where feasible instead of excavated replacement. VCS sanitary sewer television truck videos/reports available on WMS and GIS improves internal operations, record keeping and reduces/eliminates staff hours in downloading video/report information from the television truck.
- b. Capital Investment/Funding:
Funding at an estimated \$650,000 to \$1,000,000 per year from the VCS CIP and \$50,000 to \$100,000 for engineering consultant fees through 2029. Software upgrade or software purchase and training costs of \$10,000 to \$20,000.
- c. Engineering:
City Engineering Department and other engineering consultant(s)/product vendors as needed.
- d. Training:
New television truck video software training of FSD Staff.

Intangibles

Coordination of VCS and City capital projects reduces damage to quality of existing infrastructure and allows for complete reconstruction of City infrastructure assets during projects. Utilizing CIPP and manhole rehabilitation methods where feasible reduces the cost of repair/replacement projects and provides similar longevity compared to excavated construction.

Goal #3 - Acquisition of Advanced Water Meter Infrastructure (AMI)

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Real time water asset management and meter reading.
2. VCS system wide meter and Meter Transceiver Units (MXU) replacement to coordinate with AIM system implementation.
3. Enhancing water system visualization through more accurate GIS modeling.
4. Increase in customer service and feedback.
5. Training of FSD Water Metering Staff.

Timeline

1. Request vendor quotes and complete review of AMI options by September 31, 2026.
2. Meet with Senior Management to discuss AMI quotes and cost/benefits analysis by March 31, 2026.
3. Develop and complete FSD operating budget and CIP for AMI by October 31, 2026.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources

- a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management, VCS Financial Officer, FSD Staff and the VCU Board of Directors.
- b. Outside Personnel:
Vendor representative as required.

2. Financial Resources

- a. Cost/Benefit Analysis:
AIM integration will allow VCS to read meters remotely while no longer requiring VCS meter technicians to read City meters via a vehicle. This will allow for a cost savings in fuel, vehicle maintenance, employee work hours while providing for VCS meter technicians to work on other projects. The AIM system will also allow for administrative staff to perform real time meter assessment. This will further increase VCS employee productivity and improve customer service.
- b. Capital Investment/Funding:
Early estimates indicate costs for meter and MXU change out in addition to the new AMI software to range from \$3.0 to \$5.0 million.
- c. Training:
Vendor and FSD Water Metering Staff training of new AMI system, smart meters and MXUs.

Intangibles

Faster water meter testing results for high consumption checks, greater efficiency, larger dataset to help justify infrastructure improvements, reduction of water loss throughout the VCS water distribution system and improved communication between VCS Divisions.

Goal #4 - Modernize Geographic Information (GIS) and Work Management Systems (WMS)Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Utilize the Abonmarche's Technology Strategic Plan to implement recommended GIS, WMS and server system upgrades in order to consolidate software where possible for the elimination of redundancies and improve overall efficiency.
2. Consolidate Fleet Management and Asset/Work Management Systems into one (1) program to simplify user experience and avoid repetitive data entry tasks. This will enable Field Service Division (FSD) Staff to complete all work orders using upgraded mobile devices, eliminate paperwork and have a fully digital workflow.
3. Evaluate staffing needs and responsibilities for the GIS/WMS Department to ensure optimal support for VCS personnel and operations.
4. Update all GIS/WMS databases for water distribution lines, sanitary sewers and storm sewer assets.
5. Create a comprehensive Capital Improvement Master Plan in conjunction with the VCS Strategic Plan for mapping of all completed, proposed and/or historical projects into one (1) detailed interactive application.

Timeline

1. Implement new asset/work management system (EAM/WMS) software and complete training for FSD Staff by 2026.
2. Integrate billing and financial software with new EAM/WMS System by 2026.
3. Transfer to paperless work/service orders by utilizing field tablets for FSD Staff by 2026.
4. Complete staffing evaluation for GIS/WMS Department by 2026.
5. FSD Staff training will be ongoing throughout 2025-2029.
6. Update water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer assets in GIS and WMS Systems by 2026.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources

- a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management, VCS Project Manager, FSD Staff, GIS/WMS Staff and the VCU Board of Directors.
- b. Outside Resources:
City's Engineering and IT Departments, service contractors/vendors, engineering consultants and the City's Board of Public Works and Safety as needed.

2. Financial Resources

- a. Cost/Benefit Analysis:
The elimination of unnecessary software platforms and the associated future financial savings to VCS as a result of the capital expenditures to implement recommendations set forth in the Abonmarche Technology Strategic Plan. A reduction of administrative hours spent on keying in data from paper work/service orders vs. the costs of implementing field tablets. Full staffing of the WMS/GIS Database Management System to accomplish current and future goals regarding mapping and recordkeeping of water/sewer/storm assets.
- b. Capital Investment/Funding:
VCS CIP funding for computer field tablets at \$5,000 per year, engineering consultant fees and software/server upgrades between \$50,000 to \$75,000 and approximately \$150,000 additional funding per year for staff salaries and benefits. Federal, State and Local funding as feasible.
- c. Engineering:
The City's Engineering and IT Departments, service contractors/vendors and engineering consultants as needed.
- d. Training:
Future training of FSD Staff on computer field tablets usage and on new work management systems software.

Intangibles

Implementation of recommended elements in Abonmarche's Technology Strategic Plan will ensure VCS software systems are being operated and maintained properly and safely so that our generated data is formatted correctly while eliminating software duplications or inefficiencies. Elimination of paper work orders and service orders by moving to computer field tablets will allow for real time updates of workflow and asset management. Fully staffing the GIS/WMS Database Management System will provide the staffing necessary to keep up with the Division's demands and necessary technology improvements. Mapping of all proposed City capital projects together in GIS will improve coordination on collaborative project efforts between the City and VCS thereby reducing unintended infrastructure asset damages due to project overlap.

Water Treatment

The Water Treatment Division (WD) of the VCS is comprised of two drinking water treatment plants, seven potable water storage tanks/reservoirs and a water distribution system which provides an average of 6.0 million gallons per day or a combined peak treated water supply of 14.0 million gallons per day of high-quality potable water for our customers within the VCS's service area including the Valparaiso Lakes Area Conservancy District and the Aberdeen community. The water treatment/filtration plants are located next to Flint Lake and the Porter County Municipal Airport. The facilities are designed for disinfection by chlorination, fluoride addition and the removal of over 99% of the iron and manganese that naturally occur in groundwater supplies in Northwest Indiana. The water treatment plants are operated and maintained 24 hours each day of the year.

The primary **operational goals** for the Water Treatment Division in support of the defined strategic goals encompass the continuation of current operational excellence, to provide training to WD Staff on new operational computer software, managing the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) approved Wellhead Protection Program and to maintain 100% compliance with all federal, state and local drinking water regulations.

The Water Treatment Division's **strategic goals** for completion by the end of 2029 are as follows:

Goal #1 - Obtain New Water Sources (Phase III & IV) to Increase Capacity and Redundancy

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Locate new water well sites within the Parks Property within the City. Continually evaluate and in order to meet the Division's current and future water demands.
2. Explore and finalize interconnection plan with the Indiana American Water Company to purchase potable water as needed to meet high peak water demands and growth.

Timeline

1. Finalize evaluation and design of Park water well sites for the increase in water supplies before the end of June in 2025. Proceed with financing and construction by the end of 2025
2. Begin and complete evaluation of a potable water connection with the Indiana American Water Company by December 31, 2025.
3. Provide construction timeline and financing plan for both by December 31, 2025.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources
 - a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management, WD Staff, VCS Financial Officer, VCS Legal Counsel and the VCU Board of Directors.
 - b. Outside Resources:
Service contractors to provide engineering, well drilling/testing, land appraisal/purchasing, equipment rental, legal assistance, vendor participation and IDEM personnel as needed.
2. Financial Resources
 - a. Cost/Benefit Analysis:
Acquisition of land to increase capacity and redundancy for the Water Division.

- b. Capital Investment/Funding:
Approximate appraisal cost for purchasing land within the City and in Porter County and estimated costs for both the construction for new water wells and the modification of treatment plant production in order to accommodate surface water requirements.
- c. Engineering:
Selected engineering consultants and construction contractors as needed.
- d. Training:
Ongoing training of WD Staff on current and future operational processes and procedures.

Intangibles

Continuing to meet the current and future drinking water requirements of our community and the WD's customers while supporting economic development and growth of the City.

Goal #2 - Real Estate Acquisitions

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Conduct engineering studies to determine the feasibility of acquiring land within a reasonable amount of distance from the Flint Lake and the Airport Water Treatment Plants. The prospective lands should be suitable for drilling more water supply wells and/or constructing for future expansion of both water treatment plants.
2. If a purchase has been determined to be feasible, complete the appraisal of the land by several licensed appraisers.
3. Acquire a source of funding and place an offer to purchase the land.

Timeline

1. Begin and complete evaluation for the acquisition of land throughout the City and Porter County by December 31, 2029.
2. If a purchase has been determined to be feasible, purchase land before December 31, 2029.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources
 - a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management, WD Staff, VCS Financial Officer, VCS Legal Counsel and the VCU Board of Directors.
 - b. Outside Resources:
Service contractors to provide engineering, well drilling/testing, land appraisal/purchasing, equipment rental, legal assistance and vendor participation as needed.
2. Financial Resources
 - a. Cost/Benefit Analysis:
Acquisition of land for a potential water treatment plant expansion and the water source/supply needs of the City in the future.
 - b. Capital Investment/Funding:
Approximate appraisal cost for purchasing land within the City and in Porter County, Indiana.

- c. Engineering:
Selected engineering consultants and construction contractors as needed.

Intangibles

Continuing to meet the current and future drinking water requirements of our community and the WD's customers while supporting economic development and growth of the City.

Goal #3 - Modernize Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Systems

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Research new operations SCADA software.
2. Review SCADA Systems used in nearby utilities.
3. Obtain suggestions from outside agencies experienced in new SCADA integrations.

Timeline

Completion of the installation of a new SCADA System before January 1, 2026.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources
 - a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management, WD Staff and the VCU Board of Directors.
 - b. Outside Resources:
Selected SCADA System programmer/system integrator and engineering consultant as needed.
2. Financial Resources
 - a. Cost Benefit Analysis:
The original SCADA System software is outdated and no longer upgradable or supported. It is crucial to the Division's operational control to have a fully functional and robust SCADA system so that the work efficiency and high quality of the drinking water product can be maintained.
 - b. Capital Investment/Funding:
Approximate cost of the engineering, new hardware, software, installation and setup of the new SCADA system.
 - c. Engineering:
SCADA System vendors/contractors and an engineering consultant as needed.
 - d. Training:
Internal training of WD Staff provided by SCADA System vendor as needed.

Intangibles

Improved water treatment efficiencies, increased in occupational satisfaction of WD Staff and in continuing to maintain a satisfactory staffing level without sacrificing the quality of work.

Goal #4 - Update Water Conservation and Drought Plan

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Review current Water Conservation Plan.
2. Obtain suggestions from outside agencies experienced in water conservation and drought mitigation implementation.

Timeline

Completion of revised Water Conservation Plan by July 1, 2025.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources
 - a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management, WD Staff and the VCU Board of Directors.
 - b. Outside Resources:
Selected conservation consultant(s) as needed.
2. Financial Resources
 - a. Cost Benefit Analysis:
The original Water Conservation Plan is outdated and needs to reflect the current growth of the community and weather patterns of the area. Investment in training and education for the public and business.
 - b. Capital Investment/Funding:
Approximate cost of consulting and implementation of plan.
 - c. Training:
Internal training of WD Staff.

Intangibles

Improved water treatment efficiencies, increasing the life cycle of the City's water resources and having the WD prepared with standard operating procedures in the event of drought conditions.

Water Reclamation

The Water Reclamation Division (WRD) of the VCS consists of the Elden Kuehl Pollution Control Facility (EKPCF) which is a publicly-owned wastewater treatment plant and 32 sanitary wastewater lift stations that serves the residents, commercial establishments and many various sized industrial manufacturing facilities located within the service area of the VCS including the Valparaiso Lakes Area Conservancy District. Additional responsibilities are managing the IDEM approved Industrial Pretreatment and Biosolids Land Application Programs. The EKPCF is the largest wastewater treatment plant in Porter County, Indiana and treats an average wastewater flow of approximately 6.0 million gallons per day. The current plant designed capacity can treat a peak wastewater flow of 18.0 million gallons per day and will be able to treat up to 22.5 million gallons per day by the spring of 2027 after the completion of planned facility upgrades. The EKPCF is operated and maintained 24 hours each day of the year.

The main **operational goals** of the Water Reclamation Division in support of the defined strategic goals involve the continuation of current operational excellence, to provide training for WRD Staff on new process modifications and treatment equipment, to conduct a re-evaluation of the current operational condition of each of the Damon Run Conservancy District's five sanitary wastewater lift stations and to maintain 100% compliance with all federal, state and local environmental regulations.

The Water Reclamation Division's **strategic goals** to be completed at the end of 2029 include the following:

Goal #1 - Guide the Water Reclamation Division through Phase I of the EKPCF Upgrade

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

1. Have in-depth knowledge of the modifications being proposed to the facility.
2. Develop a chain-of-command for the project.
3. Establish clear lines of communication between the VCS, the design engineer and contractor.
4. Attempt to maximize the funds for the Guaranteed Savings Project for Phase II of the upgrade project.

Timeline

1. Fall of 2025 to approximately the middle of 2027.
2. Timeline completion will be dependent upon many factors including project adjustments and supply chain issues.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources
 - a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management, WRD Staff, VCS Project Manager and the VCU Board of Directors.
 - b. Outside Resources:
Staff from Stantec, Inc. (Engineer), Bowen Engineering (Contractor), IDEM and financial consultants as necessary.
2. Financial Resources
 - a. Cost/Benefit Analysis:
Replacement of aging infrastructure for improved operations and preparing for the future residential and economic growth of the City.

- b. Capital Investment/Funding:
VCS Sewer Rate Study and subsequent adjustments, State Revolving Funds (SRF) and VCS bonding capabilities.
- c. Training:
On-going training of the WRD Staff on new equipment and treatment methods in order to maintain operational excellence and compliance with all issued permits.

Intangibles

Sound planning, timely communication with all parties and reliable follow-through of Phase I operational/equipment modifications.

Goal #2 - Plan for Phase II of the EKPCF Upgrade

Strategies (Tasks or Activities Used)

Have an in-depth and working knowledge of the completion status of Phase I and to reassess the remaining needs of the EKPCF and the City's Sanitary Wastewater Lift Stations.

Timeline

Before and near the completion of Phase I of the project.

Resources Needed

1. Human Resources

- a. VCS Personnel:
Senior Management, WRD Staff, VCS Project Manager and the VCU Board of Directors.
- b. Outside Resources:
Staff from Stantec, Inc., Bowen Engineering, IDEM and financial consultant as needed.

2. Financial Resources

- a. Cost/Benefit Analysis:
Replacement of aging infrastructure for improved operations and preparing for the continued residential and economic growth of the City.
- b. Capital Investment/Funding:
VCS Sewer Rate Study and subsequent adjustments, SRF, VCS Bonding capabilities and WRD CIP.
- c. Engineering:
Design by Stantec, Inc. to continue from Phase I to complete the EKPCF planned upgrades.

Intangibles

Funding availability after the completion of the Phase I upgrades and potential changes to the requirements within the IDEM issued National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit.

Acknowledgements

The Valparaiso City Utilities and now, the Valparaiso City Services, have been strategic planning since 2009. This is the 3rd Edition of our on-going plan. It is my hope that the reader will have a better insight into who we are, what we have accomplished and the main objectives we want to attain by 2029. We think it is a journey well worth taking in providing a better quality of life for our growing community.

As with the creation of any plan of this scope and magnitude, there have been many individuals within our organization and the City who have given their time and expertise. We acknowledge their efforts here.

Many thanks go to the Valparaiso City Utilities Board of Directors and the City of Valparaiso's Board of Public Works and Safety in knowing the need for strategic planning. Steve Poulos in leading us to be better tomorrow than we are today. Peggy Busse for always keeping us organized and for her helpful ideas in this plan's development. Jackie Algozine, Shihua Chen, Jacob Chester, Cassie Clark, Dick Condon, Bob Garmon, Heather Gumz, Alina Hahn, Justin Johnson, Bill Laird, Cheryl Lutey, Nate McGinley, Carla Platipodis, Max Rehlander, Emily Reyna, Paul Scott, Bob Thompson, Katie Travis and Matt Zurbruggen for their many talents and technical knowledge.

And as with our past strategic plans, a special thank you goes to all of the men and women who are the Valparaiso City Services and will be implementing our new plan over the next five years. They are the best.

Edward J. Pilarski
Editor
Valparaiso City Services
March 2025

Steve Poulos

From: Steve Poulos
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 4:04 PM
To: Ellen Kapitan; Emilie Hunt
Cc: Bill Oeding; Katie Travis; Matt Zurbriggen
Subject: RE: Regarding Salt Usage in Winter Conditions

Councilmember,

Good afternoon. See my responses in bold font below:

I'm writing to express my concerns regarding the amount of salt being used on our city's roads and sidewalks during winter weather events. While I understand the necessity of ensuring safe travel conditions, I've observed that the volume of salt applied seems to be higher than what might be needed in certain areas. (Attached are pictures from the crossing area of Lincolnway and Washington St.)

Per the pictures that you have provided of this specific intersection, I will agree with you that it might be heavier than normal however we have had a 50-degree swing in just less than a week. Due to the amount of pedestrian traffic downtown, the crews are very careful about providing safe ramp crossings for the public.

I would appreciate it if you could provide some insight into the process the city uses when determining how much salt to apply to both the roads and sidewalks. Specifically, I'm interested in learning about the recommended salt proportions and how the city decides on the appropriate amount for different weather conditions.

Salt proportions on roads are based on the recommended tonnage per lane mile. Every year before the season, VCS calibrates and sets their salt spreaders/augers at a tonnage maximum per lane mile. We introduced Purdue's calibration methodology back in 2021 through Purdue's Local Technical Assistance Program. This assures proper calibration to determine the proper tonnage per lane mile is applied and provides a maximum limit on salting per lane mile. In other words, drivers cannot just arbitrarily oversalt.

Based on that calibration, depending on the weather event and how the event may change by the hour, the winter supervisory team may adjust the salt feed rates within the field. Per city policy, it is our primary responsibility to assure main thoroughfares are safe and passable during heavy events and also, paying special attention to critical areas (hills, roundabouts, bridges, curves, around schools and intersections). In my tenure, this has been the expectation from the administration and the community.

As far as sidewalks are concerned, downtown crews salt the intersection ramps, city hall sidewalks, stairwells, bus shelters and certain city owned parking lots.

Salt runoff also poses risks to our environment, contaminating soil and water and harming local plant and animal life. Pets and wildlife, in particular, are at risk of exposure. For example, pets walking on salted sidewalks can suffer from paw irritation or ingest salt if they lick their paws. Wildlife can be exposed to harmful concentrations of salt in their food sources or drinking water, disrupting local ecosystems and posing potential health risks.

Yes, I am very aware. I wipe and/or wash my Shihtzu paws after every walk.

In addition to the environmental concerns, I'm also worried about the negative effects of over-salting on infrastructure. Excessive salt usage can lead to significant damage to vehicles, causing rust and corrosion. Moreover, high salt concentrations can deteriorate our streets, sidewalks, and other public infrastructure, resulting in costly repairs and increased maintenance. I'm particularly concerned about the long-term effects on concrete, asphalt, and landscaping along sidewalks.

Given these concerns, I'm curious if the city has considered alternative de-icing methods or strategies to reduce salt usage while still ensuring safety for our community.

The salt that is used downtown (especially on ramps, city owned stairs, sidewalks, bus shelters) is not road salt. The team utilizes Sizzle Pro Melter as it is very effective in cold temperatures, and I am advised it is not corrosive to concrete.

If you have visited the campus at one time, you may have noted that we have (2)-5000 and (1)-3000-gallon polyethylene storage tanks that store beet juice, brine and calcium chloride. VCS has our own brine machine,

and we will mix a combination of beet juice and brine as a deicer. Our crews have been out on multiple occasions this year applying this “deicer” in anticipation of an event as we use a special spray applicator nozzles to uniformly apply the material. This type of pretreatment saves time, money and limits the wear and tear on pavement in two fashions:(1) De-icer pretreatment allows for the snow/ice accumulation (depending on event) to “burn” off thus not requiring or limiting road salt (2) It may alleviate the need of dropping snowplow blades and pounding the pavement.

The debate of salt usage has been and will continue to be a relevant environmental topic. To limit salt application at one time, we decreased the amount of road salt application in previous years and were met with complaints and dissatisfaction by residents. Finding this balance is challenging when considering the environmental effects versus the operational needs and/or wants of the community.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to your response and any information you can share on this topic

Steve Poulos

From: Ellen Kapitan <EKapitan@valpo.us>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 2:28 PM
To: Steve Poulos <spoulos@valpo.us>
Cc: Emilie Hunt <EHunt@valpo.us>
Subject: Regarding Salt Usage in Winter Conditions

Mr. Poulos,

I’m writing to express my concerns regarding the amount of salt being used on our city’s roads and sidewalks during winter weather events. While I understand the necessity of ensuring safe travel conditions, I’ve observed that the volume of salt applied seems to be higher than what might be needed in certain areas. (Attached are pictures from the crossing area of Lincolnway and Washington St.)

I would appreciate it if you could provide some insight into the process the city uses when determining how much salt to apply to both the roads and sidewalks. Specifically, I’m interested in learning about the recommended salt proportions and how the city decides on the appropriate amount for different weather conditions.

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Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to your response and any information you can share on this topic.

Ellen

Ellen Kapitan

Valparaiso City Council, At-Large

Email: ekapitan@valpo.us

Phone: (219) 798-6439

Steve Poulos

From: Ellen Kapitan
Sent: Friday, March 7, 2025 2:19 PM
To: Steve Poulos
Cc: Maureen Turman
Subject: Request for Information on Departmental Sustainability Practices
Attachments: RFI Public Works_ Utilities.pdf

Steve,

I am reaching out on behalf of the Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) to gather information about the environmental sustainability practices currently being implemented within your department. As we work to set new goals and initiatives for the city, we recognize that many departments are already engaging in sustainable practices, and we would greatly appreciate learning more about these efforts.

The purpose of this request is purely informational. We are not looking to create additional work but rather to gather a comprehensive understanding of the sustainability measures already in place across departments. This will allow the EAB to set informed and realistic goals that align with the ongoing efforts within the city. If you feel a question you have been asked is better directed at a different department, please let me know.

Additionally, the EAB is inviting a few department heads to speak at two upcoming meetings, April 7 and May 5 at 4:30pm. We would be grateful if you or a representative from your department could join us to share your department's sustainability efforts and discuss how we can support and build on these initiatives. Please let me know if you have a preferred date. There may be some arranging based on the length of presentations as some departments may have more to present than others.

To recap, attached and linked below are the questions we are asking your department. We would request that the questions lead your presentation in whichever meeting you are able to attend. If your department is able to send the questions back answered at your convenience, we would be grateful for that information.

Thank you in advance for your time and for the important work you and your team are doing to make Valparaíso a more environmentally sustainable community. We look forward to hearing from you and appreciate your help in guiding the EAB as we work on setting meaningful goals for the city.

 [RFI Public Works_ Utilities.docx](#)

Thank you,

Questions for the City Engineer Regarding Current Sustainability Efforts and Policies

1. **Generally**

- What are the existing sustainability policies or practices utilized by your department?
- Are there policies or practices that your department could easily integrate that would improve sustainability and environmental outcomes?

2. **Green Infrastructure & Stormwater Management**

- What sustainability measures are currently in place for **stormwater management** in Valparaiso?
- Are there any policies requiring **green infrastructure solutions**, such as rain gardens, permeable pavement, or bioswales, in new developments?
- Are there any **stormwater runoff regulations** for businesses and contractors, and how are they enforced?

3. **Land Use & Development Policies**

- Does the city require an assessment to **identify potential environmental impacts** for new developments? If not, are there plans to implement such a policy?
- What criteria must be met before approving a **land development project** in terms of sustainability?
- Are there any **zoning requirements** that promote environmental sustainability (e.g., green space preservation, tree protection, or wildlife corridors)?
- What is the city's policy on **invasive plant species** in new developments and landscaping projects?
- Are there existing guidelines to encourage or require **low-water and native plant landscaping** for businesses, city projects, and new developments?

4. **Energy & Renewable Initiatives**

- What renewable energy projects has the city implemented, and are there plans for expansion (e.g., **solar panel installations** on public buildings)?
- Are there policies or programs that encourage **energy-efficient building practices** for new developments or city-owned facilities?
- Are there any incentives for businesses or residents to transition to **renewable energy sources**?

- Have there been any efforts to promote the energy efficiency programs offered by NIPSCO? Do we know how many Valparaiso residents have taken advantage of their programs?

5. Recycling & Waste Management

- How is **construction and demolition waste** managed in Valparaiso? Are there policies promoting reuse and recycling of materials?

6. Future Sustainability Initiatives & Goals

- Are there any **long-term sustainability plans** for the city, and what key initiatives are being prioritized?
- How can the Environmental Advisory Board collaborate with the city engineering department to support sustainability goals?

Questions for the Planning Department Regarding Current Sustainability Efforts and Policies

1. Unified Development Code & Zoning

- How does the planning department utilize the UDC?
- How does the UDC dictate sustainability requirements, if at all?
- What sustainability requirements would be helpful to the planning department, if added to the UDC?

2. Sustainable Transportation & Urban Planning

- What efforts have been made to create more **pedestrian-friendly and bike-friendly infrastructure** in Valparaiso?
- Are there plans to implement **Complete Streets policies**, ensuring safer and more sustainable road designs that incorporate green spaces and non-motorized transportation?
- What role does sustainability play in **public transportation planning** for the city?

3. Sustainable Practices for Public Lands & Parks

- What efforts are being made to **preserve green spaces** and protect **natural habitats** in city planning?

Questions for the Director of Parks and Recreation Regarding Current Sustainability Efforts and Policies

1. Green Space Management & Conservation

1. What policies are in place to **preserve and expand green spaces** in Valparaíso's parks and public lands?
2. How does the Parks Department determine which areas should be **preserved as natural habitats** versus those that should be developed for recreational use?
3. Are there any current initiatives focused on **reforestation, tree planting, or native habitat restoration** in city parks?

2. Pesticide, Herbicide, and Land Maintenance Policies

4. What are the current policies on **pesticide, herbicide, and fertilizer use** in parks and public spaces?
5. Is there an effort to transition to **organic or environmentally friendly alternatives** for weed and pest control?
6. How frequently are parks and public lands **mowed**, and has there been consideration for **reduced mowing in certain areas** to promote biodiversity and pollinator habitats?

3. Water Conservation & Stormwater Management

7. How does the Parks Department manage **stormwater runoff** in public parks to prevent pollution and erosion?
8. Are there any efforts to implement **rain gardens, bioswales, or permeable pavement** in parks to improve stormwater absorption?
9. What initiatives are in place to **reduce water usage** in public parks, such as **drought-resistant landscaping or irrigation system improvements**?

4. Waste Reduction & Recycling

10. What recycling options are currently available in Valparaíso's parks, and how does the department ensure they are effectively used?
11. Has there been discussion about expanding recycling infrastructure in parks, such as **dedicated compost bins or separate waste streams for different materials**?
12. Are there any initiatives in place to **reduce single-use plastics** in park facilities, events, and concession areas?

5. Community Engagement & Education

13. Does the Parks Department have any programs that **educate the community** about environmental sustainability and conservation?

14. How can the Environmental Advisory Board collaborate with Parks and Recreation to promote **sustainability initiatives** within the community?
15. What opportunities exist for **volunteers or local organizations** to contribute to sustainability efforts in Valparaiso's parks (e.g., tree planting, invasive species removal, community gardens)?

Questions for the Director of Public Works Regarding Current Sustainability Efforts and Policies

1. Waste Management & Recycling

1. What are the current **recycling policies and programs** in Valparaiso for both residential and commercial properties?
2. Given the cancellation of programs in neighboring towns (Gary, Hobart, Portage), what is the status of the curbside recycling program in Valparaiso? Based on past performance, does the city have plans to reduce or expand recycling?
3. Are there any **specialized recycling programs** in place or being considered (e.g., **cardboard-only recycling, composting, hazardous waste disposal**)?
4. What percentage of the city's waste is currently **diverted from landfills** through recycling and composting efforts?
5. What is the status of the City's wastewater treatment operations and its industrial users? Have there been any issues or exceedances that have required intervention?

2. Energy & Water Conservation in Public Infrastructure

5. What measures has the Public Works Department taken to **increase energy efficiency** in city-owned buildings and infrastructure?
6. Are there plans to expand the use of **renewable energy sources** (e.g., **solar panels, energy-efficient streetlights**) within the department's operations?
1. What steps are being taken to **reduce water consumption** in city-managed facilities and infrastructure?

3. Stormwater & Green Infrastructure Management

8. What policies are currently in place to manage **stormwater runoff** and prevent pollution from entering local waterways?

9. Does the city use or plan to implement **green infrastructure solutions** (e.g., **rain gardens, permeable pavement, bioswales**) to improve water management?
10. How does the city ensure that **contractors and developers comply with stormwater regulations** to prevent erosion and water contamination?

4. Sustainable Transportation & Fleet Management

11. Is the city taking steps to **transition its vehicle fleet** to more **fuel-efficient or electric vehicles**?
12. Are there any initiatives to improve **public transportation infrastructure** or support **bike-friendly and pedestrian-friendly** city planning?
13. Has the department considered policies to reduce **road salt usage** in winter due to its environmental impact on soil and water quality?

5. Community Engagement & Future Sustainability Goals

14. What sustainability initiatives or programs is the Public Works Department currently prioritizing?
15. How can the Environmental Advisory Board collaborate with Public Works to support **sustainability efforts and policy improvements** in Valparaiso?

6. Water Quality

16. What contaminants are tested for in drinking water?
17. What, if any, are new concerns for contaminants (PFAs)?
18. What is the status of the lead pip identification and replacement project?
19. How are wellheads managed?
20. Aquifers

Questions for Local Nonprofits, Clubs, and Interest Groups Regarding Sustainability Efforts and Events

1. Organization Overview & Mission

1. Can you provide a brief overview of your organization's **mission and focus areas** related to sustainability?

2. What are your **current sustainability initiatives or projects** in Valparaiso?

2. Community Engagement & Events

1. What **events, workshops, or public programs** does your organization currently host or plan to host in 2025?
2. Are there any upcoming sustainability-related events that you would like to **promote or collaborate on** with other organizations or the Environmental Advisory Board?
3. How can community members, students, or local businesses get **involved in your sustainability efforts** (e.g., volunteering, advocacy, educational programs)?

Questions for Code Enforcement

1. What are the most common environmentally related enforcement cases involving residents, developers and commercial businesses?
2. Are the ramifications for a code violation sufficient to deter continued violations in such cases?
3. Would outreach campaigns on specific issues help educate residents and businesses and potentially decrease violations?