

**City of Valparaiso, IN Application
Opportunity Zone Designation
Census Tract 18127050900**

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Opportunity Zone Public Recommendation Form

Which of the following best describes your vocation?

Government Official

Name (Last, First):

Orchard, Lauren

Proposed Tract:

18127050900

Email:

lorchard@valpo.us

City:

Valparaiso

Phone Number:

219-548-4808

County of Tract:

Porter

Please give a description of the current and potential future land use within your proposed tract:

Currently, Census Tract 18127050900, is comprised of a vacant industrial complex, a blighted neighborhood, scrap metal yards, a former concrete dump site, and is located between two rail lines. Due to this composition, Census Tract 18127050900 is a low-income, environmentally challenged area in need of redevelopment. Despite these challenges, Census Tract 18127050900 is attracting attention from developers due to its intrinsic qualities, including a 3-block proximity to Valparaiso's economically diverse downtown, frontage along two main thoroughfares, proximity to Valparaiso University, presence of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district within its boundaries, and the City's financial commitment to complete environmental remediation and infrastructure improvements.

The City of Valparaiso is focused on redeveloping a significant portion of Census Tract 18127050900, which is made up of industrial, commercial, and residential parcels. In 2016, the City of Valparaiso added multiple parcels within the Census Tract 18127050900 to its TIF district, allowing the City's Redevelopment Commission to invest in public improvements within or serving the TIF district. In addition to TIF district expansion, the City has also acquired and remediated over 27 acres of land and 150,000 square feet of abandoned industrial buildings, relocated and expanded commuter bus services to the area, and secured state grant funds from the Northwest Regional Development Authority (RDA) to invest in the area. With these public investments, the City of Valparaiso aims to leverage private dollars that support regional tourism, workforce housing, job-creation, and in-migration.

Developers expressing interest in Census Tract 18127050900 have proposed uses including agricultural tourism, mixed-use development, and workforce housing. Based on public commitments exceeding \$12 million and private-sector interest, the City of Valparaiso expects investments in this area to exceed \$24 million in the next 5 years, leading to economic growth that will encourage job creation and talent retention in Northwest Indiana.

Describe any recent investments made in your proposed tract:

In 2016, the City of Valparaiso added multiple parcels within the Census Tract 18127050900 to its Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district (over 23% of the total Census Tract acreage), allowing the City to invest in public improvements within or serving the TIF district.

While extending our TIF district into this Census Tract, the City of Valparaiso also secured a grant from the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) for \$6.8 million to expand transit opportunities in Valparaiso. With the establishment of a TIF district and an RDA grant, the City purchased ~27 acres of land, including an abandoned industrial complex, 9 blighted residential structures, and a former concrete dumpsite. Since purchasing this land, the City of Valparaiso has worked to environmentally remediate properties, demolish unusable and blighted structures, and rehabilitate remaining buildings. The City has also expanded parking availability in the area for commuters using ChicaGo DASH and Coach USA bus services. So far, the City of Valparaiso has invested approximately \$3 million in the development of this area. In total, the Commission is committed to investing over \$12 million in Census Tract 18127050900.

In addition to this guaranteed public investment, Valparaiso is aggressively pursuing private development in Census Tract 18127050900, with selection of developers set for the summer of 2018. The City aims to sell redeveloped buildings and properties to the private sector, encouraging investments that support regional tourism, workforce housing, job-creation, and in-migration.

In fact, the City of Valparaiso issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for all 27 acres of City-owned property, with responses due April 12, 2018. The RFP has garnered a high level of interest from developers, with potential respondents supporting agricultural tourism, mixed-use development, and workforce housing. The City is confident that this project will result in over \$24 million of investment from both the public and private sector. The City of Valparaiso believes that designating Census Tract 18127050900 as an Opportunity Zone will help solidify developer interest and encourage large-scale investment in this area, adding to the economic vitality of Valparaiso to Northwest Indiana.

Describe any anticipated investments that could be attracted by an opportunity zone designation.

The City of Valparaiso has committed \$12 million in public funds to the development of Census Tract 18127050900 and anticipates private investment of an additional \$12 million within the next 5 years. Based on significant interest shown by local and regional developers, the City expects large-scale, project-based investments in Census Tract 18127050900 that would be amplified by Opportunity Zone designation. As part of the City's redevelopment of a former industrial site and surrounding parcels, over 27 acres have been issued as for-sale or lease to the private sector. With Opportunity Zone designation, developers interested in City-owned property

would be encouraged to invest more heavily in Census Tract 18127050900 due to tax deferment of capital gains earned within the area.

In addition to heightened investment from developers interested in City-owned parcels, the creation of an Opportunity Zone would also encourage investment from business clusters within Valparaiso looking to expand within City limits and would offer an attractive location to businesses looking to relocate to Northwest Indiana. Any investment that does result from the \$12 million of guaranteed public investment and Opportunity Zone designation would cause a ripple-effect of growth in Northwest Indiana, as economic vitality continues to attract private investment to Valparaiso.

Provide any other relevant information and additional reasons for recommending this census tract:

Valparaiso has a track record of attracting private investment to our community, with over 12 commercial relocations and 8 expansions in the City since 2015. The City estimates that Valparaiso has experienced over \$300 million in private investment between 2014 and 2017 contributing to increased tax draws and job creation in Indiana.

This high level of investment is, in part, due to Valparaiso's commitment to leverage private dollars with public incentives, including infrastructure improvements, tax abatements, TIF-related investments, and limited up-front capital. In fact, Valparaiso has offered 33 tax abatements since 2014, spurring over \$264 million in private investment. In addition to these direct public incentives, Valparaiso has also invested in public improvements that increase the aesthetic value of its neighborhoods and downtown, making the City an attractive location for businesses looking to entice a skilled workforce. Furthermore, Valparaiso businesses invest in public spaces, with 4 local businesses contributing over \$4.5 million to the construction of Valparaiso's award-winning Central Park Plaza.

In addition to private business investment, Valparaiso has also witnessed a strong interest in downtown residential development; almost all available downtown residential space is in use and multiple projects are in stages of completion. The most recent residential project near Valparaiso's downtown is a 48-unit development that is under construction and has seen high demand. Valparaiso is also starting to experience development of existing residential structures; some including demolition and reconstruction and some including rehabilitation of older homes. Based on this housing market demand, there is a strong indication that homeowners are interested in being near Valparaiso's downtown, including Census Tract 18127050900.

Letters of Support

Opportunity Zone Designation

Census Tract 18127050900

Jon Costas, *Mayor*, **City of Valparaiso**

Jeff Good, *President*, **Porter County Board of Commissioners**

Rob Thorgren, *President*, **Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission**

Mark Heckler, *President*, **Valparaiso University**

Patrick Lyp, *Vice President*, **Valparaiso Economic Development Corporation**

Rex Richards, *President*, **Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce**

Office of the Mayor
JON COSTAS
mayorcostas@valpo.us

Governor Eric Holcomb
200 W. Washington St., Rm. 206
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Re: Opportunity Zone Designation, Valparaiso Census Tract 18127050900

Dear Governor Holcomb:

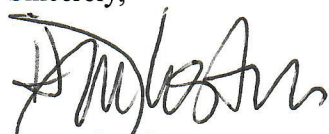
I hope this letter finds you well. The City of Valparaiso has been made aware of the local benefits of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, which allows governors to nominate low-income census tracts as Opportunity Zones. The City of Valparaiso is applying for Opportunity Zone designation of Census Tract 18127050900, a New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC)-qualified location in Porter County, Indiana.

With Valparaiso's growing economy and proven record of leveraging private investment, the City believes it is in a unique position to encourage investment exceeding \$24 million in Census Tract 18127050900 within the next 5 years. Because of Census Tract 18127050900's proximity to Valparaiso's downtown, a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district within its boundaries, frontage along main thoroughfares, and the City's aggressive investment in public infrastructure, the area is already attracting developers despite the challenges presented by its current low-income status. The City of Valparaiso believes that designating Census Tract 18127050900 as an "Opportunity Zone" will help solidify developer interest and encourage large-scale investment in this area, adding to the economic vitality of Valparaiso and Northwest Indiana.

Our application for Opportunity Zone designation has broad community support, with backing from Porter County, Valparaiso University, the Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce, the Valparaiso Economic Development Corporation, and the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission. These organizations have personally experienced the economic vitality of Valparaiso and believe that Opportunity Zone designation will lead to increased investments in an area primed for development.

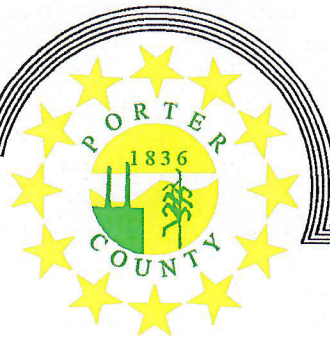
We appreciate your consideration of Valparaiso in the designation process, and look forward to working with your office as we apply for Opportunity Zone designation of Census Tract 18127050900.

Sincerely,



Mayor Jon Costas
The City of Valparaiso, Indiana

COUNTY - PORTER



Board of Commissioners

Administration Center
155 Indiana Ave. • Ste. 205
Valparaiso, Indiana 46383

North District

Jim Biggs

(219) 465-3361

Center District

Jeff Good

(219) 465-3354

South District

Laura M. Blaney

(219) 465-3349

(219) 465-3440

Fax: (219) 465-3362

March 21, 2018

Governor Eric Holcomb
200 W. Washington St., Rm. 206
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Holcomb:

I write this letter in support of the City of Valparaiso's application for Opportunity Zone designation of Census Tract 18127050900. I understand that Opportunity Zone designation will play a significant role in encouraging private investment in low-income areas over the next 10 years, and recommend that the State of Indiana accept Valparaiso's application for this designation.

In addition to serving as President of the Porter County Commissioners, I am a business owner and Valparaiso resident. I have seen tremendous growth in Valparaiso over the past 14 years, due in large part to the City's commitment to leverage private development with public investment. Most notably, Valparaiso's downtown has seen increased private development following the City's investment in façade grants, improved public infrastructure and amenities. These public investments have drawn businesses to the downtown while increasing tourism and in-migration to Porter County. With this track record of growth, I am confident that Valparaiso will attract private investment to Census Tract 18127050900.

Despite Census Tract 18127050900's low-income status, it is my understanding that the City of Valparaiso is working to redevelop over 27 acres of land located within the area to complement and leverage its successful Chicago commuter bus service. I previously served on the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA). The RDA originally supported and helped fund the Chicago commuter bus service from Valparaiso back in 2007 and has committed \$6.8M towards this current expansion. Since the City has taken on the initiative to redevelop Census Tract 18127050900, I have witnessed a great deal of interest from developers and am confident that the City will see high levels of private investment over the next 5 years with Opportunity Zone status.

With the development of Census Tract 18127050900 as an Opportunity Zone, I believe Valparaiso will experience increased investment in an area prepared for development, leading to a higher likelihood of job creation and in-migration. These benefits will affect not only Valparaiso, but also Porter County and the State of Indiana. Therefore, I highly recommend your consideration of Valparaiso's Census Tract 18127050900 for Opportunity Zone status.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Good".

Jeff Good
President, Porter County Commission
Valparaiso, IN

March 21, 2018

Governor Eric Holcomb
200 W. Washington St., Rm. 206
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Holcomb:

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Valparaiso's application for Opportunity Zone designation for Census Tract 18127050900. As a business owner in Valparaiso, and President of the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission, I recognize the impact Opportunity Zones will have on private investment and I strongly encourage you to choose Census Tract 18127050900 as one of Indiana's nominations.

The Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission is focused on redeveloping a significant portion of Census Tract 18127050900, which is made up of industrial, commercial, and residential parcels approximately three blocks from the City's downtown. In 2016, the Commission added multiple parcels within the Census Tract 18127050900 to our Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, allowing the Commission to invest in public improvements within or serving the TIF district.

While extending our TIF district into this Census Tract, the Commission also secured a grant from the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) for \$6.8 million to expand transit opportunities in Valparaiso. With the establishment of a TIF district and an RDA grant, the Commission purchased ~27 acres of land, including an abandoned industrial complex, 9 blighted residential structures, and a former concrete dumpsite. Since purchasing this land, the Commission has worked to environmentally remediate properties, demolish unusable and blighted structures, and rehabilitate remaining buildings. The Commission has also expanded parking availability in the area for commuters using ChicaGo DASH and Coach USA bus services. So far, the Commission has invested approximately \$3 million in the development of this area.

The Commission's goal is to sell redeveloped buildings and properties to the private sector, encouraging investments that support regional tourism, workforce housing, job-creation, and in-migration. In fact, the Commission issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for all 27 acres, with responses due April 12, 2018. The RFP has garnered a high level of interest from developers, with potential respondents supporting agricultural tourism, mixed-use development, and workforce housing. The Commission is confident that this project will result in over \$24 million of investment from both the public and private sector.

In total, the Commission is committed to investing over \$12 million in Census Tract 18127050900. In addition to this guaranteed public investment, Valparaiso is aggressively pursuing private development in Census Tract 18127050900, with selection of developers set for the summer of 2018. I encourage the State of Indiana to choose Census Tract 18127050900 as one of Indiana's nominations for Opportunity Zone designation to increase private investment dollars in an area primed for development.

Sincerely,



Rob Thorgren
President
Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission



Valparaiso University

Office of the President

March 21, 2018

Governor Eric Holcomb
200 W. Washington St., Rm. 206
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Holcomb:

Greetings from Valparaiso University!

I am pleased to write to you in support of the City of Valparaiso's Opportunity Zone application for Census Tract 18127050900. It is my understanding that Opportunity Zone designation will positively impact our community by encouraging investment in a low-income census tract. Based on my experience working with the City on large-scale projects, the growth I have witnessed in Valparaiso over the past 10 years, and my knowledge of current public investment in Census Tract 18127050900, I am confident that Opportunity Zone designation will spur economic development, job creation, and talent retention in Valparaiso, benefiting Valparaiso University students, faculty, and staff.

Valparaiso University and the City of Valparaiso have a successful partnership, identifying and acting on common goals. Through this partnership, I have personally witnessed the City's commitment to leverage private dollars through public investment and I believe that Opportunity Zone designation will amplify these efforts, bringing large-scale projects to Census Tract 18127050900. It is my hope that investment resulting from Opportunity Zone designation will lead to job creation, regional tourism, and increased talent retention of Valparaiso University students.

I encourage you to nominate Valparaiso's Census Tract 18127050900 as an Opportunity Zone to target investment in a community that is primed for development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark A. Heckler'.

Mark A. Heckler, Ph.D.
President

VALPARAISO Economic Development Corp.

March 21, 2018

Governor Eric Holcomb
200 W. Washington St., Room 206
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Holcomb:

The City of Valparaiso is applying for an Opportunity Zone for Census Tract 509.

The Valparaiso Economic Development Corporation has been assisting the City of Valparaiso and the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission in demolishing and rejuvenating this area for the last two years.

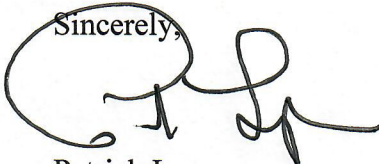
The benefits of the Opportunity Zone will help attract private dollars to achieve a rejuvenation of an area that is strategic to our vibrant downtown.

The Valparaiso Economic Development Corporation asks that our Census Tract 509 be designated an Opportunity Zone. Valparaiso has been successful in delivering results to improve our community with successful initiatives, using both public and private partnerships.

Designating Census Tract 509 as an Opportunity Zone will greatly assist our current efforts.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Lyp', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Patrick Lyp
Vice-President



March 21, 2018

Governor Eric Holcomb
200 W. Washington St., Room 206
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Holcomb:

The Greater Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce supports the City of Valparaiso's application for Opportunity Zone status for Census Tract 509, a new markets tax credit (NMTC)-qualified location in Porter County, Indiana.

This designation will greatly assist in turning a blighted area into a desirable expansion of our vibrant downtown which is only three blocks from our central business district.

The Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission has begun acquiring property and clearing unsightly buildings and shanties for further development.

Designating Census Tract 509 with the Opportunity Zone status will help to continue the momentum to reaching all the good of attracting private developers to reinvigorate this tired and worn out area.

Please approve this designation for Valparaiso and Porter County, Indiana.

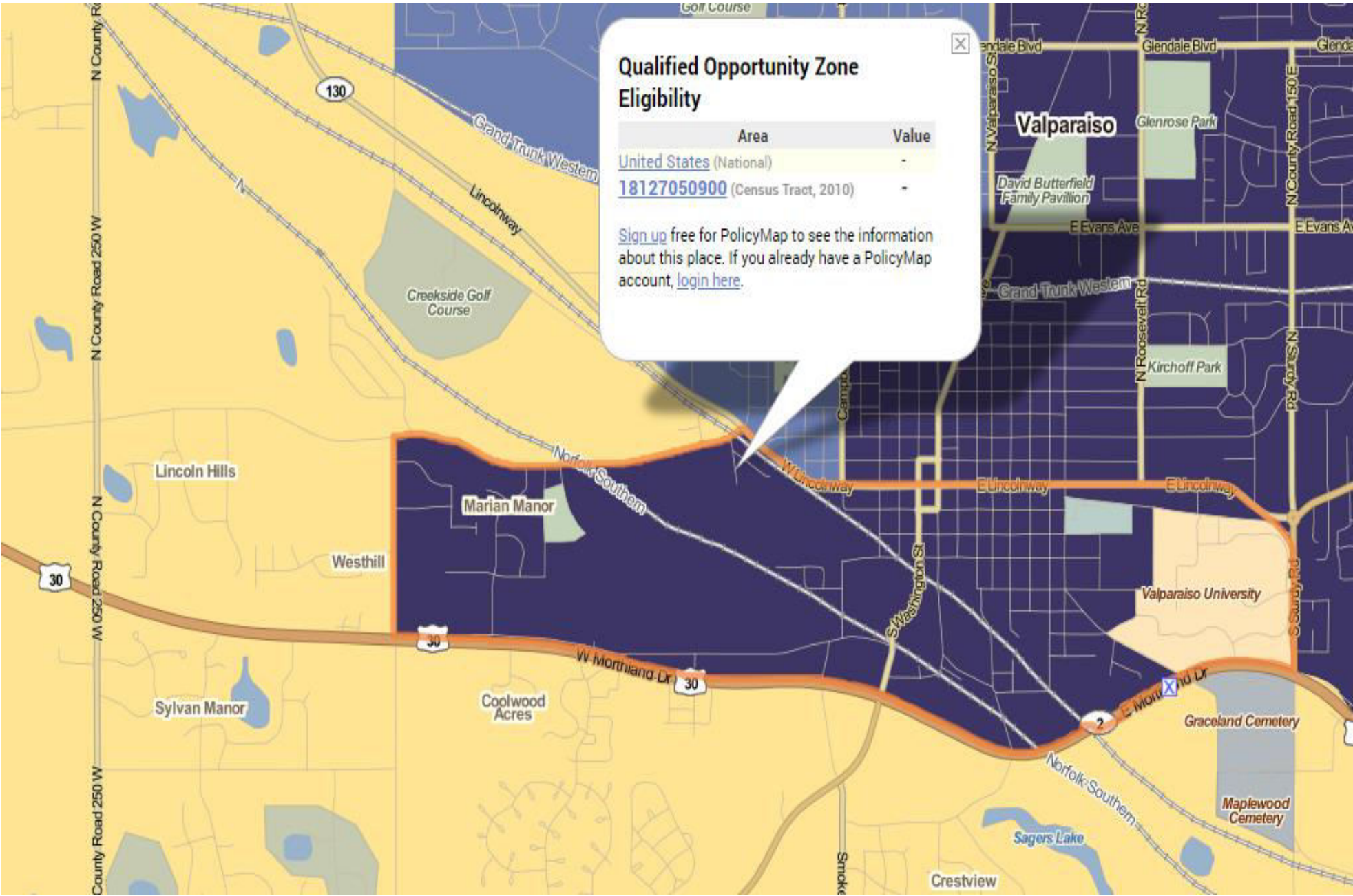
Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rex G. Richards". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rex G. Richards, CCE
President

Census Tract Maps
Opportunity Zone Designation
Census Tract 18127050900



Census Tract 509

- Legend**
-  Valparaiso City Limits
 -  Census Tract 509
 -  CT 509 within City Limits
 -  TIF Districts within CT 509



	Square Feet	Acres	% in CT 509
Census Tract 509	49070642	1126.51	100
Census Tract 509 within City Limits	48011844	1102.2	97.84
TIF Districts within Census Tract 509	11651925	267.49	23.75

