

# LIVABLE MUNSTER



♦ CHARACTER-BASED CODE ♦



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is zoning? What is it not?

The Town of Munster uses a zoning code to separate land into different areas, or zones, and establish different rules about the property in each zone. Zoning codes regulate how property can be used, such as for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes; and the form of the buildings and land, such as building height, yard size, required parking spaces, etc. Zoning does not affect property ownership and is not a plan to force development in certain areas of Town. It establishes the rules and standards for areas IF and WHEN they are developed or redeveloped.

### How will existing developments be affected by the code?

The new code will affect only new development and redevelopment projects. When a property owner initiates a change in a building or land, that owner will be required to adhere to the rules of the new code. Until that time, existing development can be maintained and repaired and will not be required to be changed in any way.

### What areas of town will be affected by the code?

The new zoning code will apply to the entire Town, though some areas will be more affected than others. The majority of single-family residential neighborhoods will likely remain as-is, with the same standards for buildings and uses.

Munster's Comprehensive Plan, updated in 2010, includes a Land Use Plan that identifies revitalization opportunities, including Northwest Munster, Town Hall Square, Lake Business Center, Calumet Avenue and Ridge Road, and the Munster Steel Site. These areas of Town will be most affected by the Code, which will be reviewed and revised to enable the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan.

### How will this project affect traffic congestion?

The zoning project does not include any type of traffic study or recommendations. Character-based zoning encourages well-connected, multi-modal street networks and mixed-use development. Providing multiple points of connectivity throughout a neighborhood increases the number of routes available to get from Point A to Point B, thereby reducing the number of cars on collector streets. In addition, providing safe and connected pedestrian and bicycle networks, as well as access to transit, provides non-vehicular transportation options, which can reduce the number of cars on all streets. Finally, mixed-use development creates environments where residents have access to amenities and services within close proximity to their homes, allowing them to walk to stores and other businesses instead of hopping in a vehicle and contributing to traffic congestion.

### What is Character-Based zoning?

Character-based zoning is an approach to zoning that emphasizes the character or form of the built environment, rather than the activities that take place in that environment. While conventional zoning typically segregates uses, character-based zoning encourages mixed-use development and more walkable environments. Character-Based zoning protects the most-loved parts of Town, enhances areas that need improvement, creates more predictable outcomes, balances all modes of transportation, and is typically easier to use and administer than a conventional zoning code.

### What opportunities do residents and business owners have to provide input?

The Livable Munster Character-Based Code project includes multiple opportunities for the community to provide input. A public design charrette, called Planapalooza™, will take place July 26 to 30. The schedule of events will include a community workshop on July 26th, technical meetings on the 27th, and a work-in-progress presentation on July 30th. From Friday, July 27th to Monday, July 30th, Consultant team will be set up in a studio in the Town Hall that will be open to the public, who are invited to stop in and provide their ideas and feedback as the code begins to take shape. After the Planapalooza™, work will continue on the code, taking into account all of the public input received.

In early 2019, the Consultant will return to Munster to present a Public Draft of the code, which will then be made available to all members of the community for review and comment. After the Public Review Period, the code will be revised into an adoption version, which will go through a formal review addition process, including meetings of the Plan Commission and Town Council. The public will be able to provide additional input during this process and are encouraged to voice their support or concern.

### What is the relationship between the project and South Shore extension?

The Northern Indiana Commuter Transit District (NICTD) has proposed an extension of the South Shore commuter railroad from Hammond, through Munster, to Dyer, with stations in Munster at Ridge Road and Main Street. The update of the Munster zoning ordinance is a Town project and is taking place independently of the railroad project. A goal of the zoning update is to develop a set of regulations that will improve the built environment regardless of whether the rail project or any other large project is implemented. If the commuter rail line is built though, the Town will be prepared to regulate any transit-oriented development with a new zoning ordinance that reflects our vision for the Town.

For more information on this project,  
please visit the Town of Munster website: <https://tinyurl.com/ZoneMunster>

**FUTURE  
EVENTS**

PLANAPALOOZA | JULY 26 – 30