

Town of Munster, Indiana

Comprehensive Plan

Proposal

January 28, 2022





Town of Munster
Community Development Department
Attn: Thomas Vander Woude
1005 Ridge Road
Munster, IN 46321

Dear Mr. Vander Woude,

Houseal Lavigne is pleased to submit this proposal for the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Munster, Indiana. Our Project Team is uniquely qualified to undertake this assignment, bringing insight, expertise, and understanding from working with clients throughout the Midwest and across the United States. Our team of professionals provides the skills necessary to create a responsive and visionary Comprehensive Plan. We are committed to excellence and available to undertake this assignment immediately upon selection.

Houseal Lavigne is an award-winning community planning, urban design, and economic development consulting firm with experience in a range of assignments, including comprehensive planning, outreach and facilitation, redevelopment projects, transit-oriented development, parks and open space, transportation planning, and project financing and implementation. Our work on over 450 plans and projects in more than 400 communities across the country includes planning projects in other Indiana communities such as Brownsburg, Culver, Crothersville, Edinburgh, Plainfield, Tipton, and Tipton County. Our firm has also developed comprehensive plans for the nearby communities of Crete, Lynwood, and Lansing in Illinois and we are currently undertaking the Comprehensive Plan for Fort Wayne and Allen County.

Houseal Lavigne has won multiple APA awards in several states for comprehensive plans, community outreach, corridor plans, technology applications, and actionable implementation. Additionally, our firm was awarded the National Planning Excellence Award for an Emerging Planning and Design Firm from the American Planning Association (APA). The award noted our innovation, implementation success, creative and effective outreach, integration of technology, industry-leading graphic communication, and our overall influence on the profession of planning in the United States.

For this assignment, we have partnered with **Troyer Group**, a full-service engineering and transportation consulting firm with multiple Indiana offices. We are currently working with Troyer Group on the Fort Wayne-Allen County Comprehensive Plan and intend to bring this successful working relationship into the Munster Comprehensive Plan assignment.

We appreciate the opportunity to be considered for this important project and look forward to the prospect of collaborating with you and the entire Munster community on the development of the Comprehensive Plan. We can undertake the assignment immediately upon selection and meet all deliverable dates and milestones. If you have any questions regarding this submittal, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

John Houseal
Principal | Co-Founder

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SECTION 1

TEAM OVERVIEW

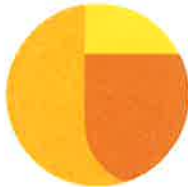
Team Overview

Our project team for the Town of Munster Comprehensive Plan assignment is made up of a team of professionals with specialized expertise in all areas of comprehensive planning, zoning, downtown and corridor planning, neighborhood and special area planning, economic development and market analysis, community outreach and engagement, and implementation. Our project team has been assembled to provide the Town of Munster with a responsive, effective, creative, and specifically unique Comprehensive Plan.

For the Town of Munster Comprehensive Plan assignment we are joined by Troyer Group, a full-service engineering and transportation consulting firm with multiple Indiana offices.



Houseal Lavigne is an award-winning consulting firm specializing in all areas of community planning, urban design, and economic development. We have expertise and experience with assignments of all scales, including regional, city-wide, subarea, district, and site-specific planning and design. We strive for a true collaboration of disciplines and talents, infusing all our projects with creativity, realism, and insight.



Troyer Group shapes places, systems, and infrastructure that prioritize people and their experiences. From large destination developments to public placemaking endeavors, urban revitalization to active recreation, transportation design, infrastructure design, to environmental stewardship; in all of these things, Troyer Group seeks to make a positive economic, environmental, and social impact. They believe that everything comes down to people and their experiences. In focusing on people, they provide contextual solutions that create economic, social, and environmental value; working with a community to achieve its vision. It is this broad expertise that has enabled them to help make their clients more successful for nearly half a century.





Lead Consultant

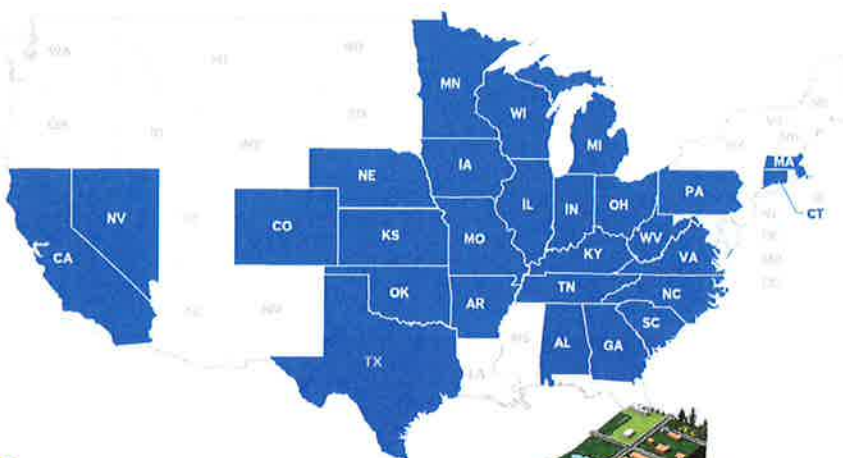
Houseal Lavigne

Houseal Lavigne is an innovation-based urban planning and design firm. We pride ourselves on creativity, collaboration, and delivery of quality. Our team approach is built on strong relationships, the exchange of ideas, and a commitment to the integration of technology. Our priorities are to do good, have fun, work hard, and provide responsive, visionary, and viable solutions to our clients and partners.

OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS,
WE HAVE WORKED ON MORE THAN **450 PLANS** ACROSS MORE
THAN **400 COMMUNITIES NATIONWIDE**. WE HAVE DIRECTED...



OUR **NATIONAL EXPERIENCE** INCLUDES PLANNING,
DESIGN, ECONOMIC, AND ZONING ASSIGNMENTS IN...



SERVICES

- Comprehensive Planning
- Neighborhood & Subarea Planning
- Zoning/Regulatory Controls
- Downtown Planning
- Transit-Oriented Development
- Corridor Planning
- Design Guidelines
- Land Planning & Site Design
- Park, Recreation & Trail Master Planning
- Market & Demographic Analysis
- Fiscal/Economic Impact Analysis
- Development Services
- Retainer Services



GIS & GEOSPATIAL TECHNOLOGY

GIS and Geospatial technologies are an integral part of all our services areas, including Comprehensive Planning, Land Planning & Site Design, Visualization, and Community Engagement efforts. Houseal Lavigne Associates (HLA) is an Esri Silver Business Partner and has been designated with the ArcGIS Online Specialty and Release Ready Certifications that recognizes our expertise in the implementation and utilization of the ArcGIS Platform.

HLA is one of a select few Urban Planning firms in the United States that have been awarded the ArcGIS Urban Specialty Designation further exemplifying our commitment to being on the forefront of GIS technology for urban planning.



ArcGIS Online
Specialty



ArcGIS Urban
Specialty



Release Ready
Specialty

Comprehensive Plan | Town of Munster, Indiana
Prepared by Houseal Lavigne

FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

Houseal Lavigne began with a set of founding principles that still guide every project we undertake. By continually honoring these principles, we have reliably and repeatedly served our clients, established trust and strong professional relationships, and produced results that exceed expectations, and developed plans that have served as points of pride for communities. By adhering to our founding principles, we have emerged as one of the most respected, trusted, innovative, and effective firms in the industry. Our founding principles are:

Better Community Outreach. We believe strongly in fostering a sense of "community stewardship" by using an inclusive approach to stakeholder engagement as a foundation for all our projects.

Commitment to Creativity. We believe vision and creativity are among the most important components of good planning and design, and we pledge to provide fresh, responsive, and intriguing ideas for local consideration.

Graphic Communication. We believe all planning processes and documents should utilize a highly illustrative and graphic approach to better communicate planning and development concepts in a user friendly, easy to understand, and attractive manner.

Technology Integration. We believe the integration of emerging technologies should be used to improve the planning process and product - improving public engagement and involvement, fostering evidence-based decision-making, and producing more effective documents and recommendations.

Client Satisfaction. We believe meeting the needs of our clients is a top priority and we strive to achieve it by developing and maintaining strong professional relationships, being responsive to clients' concerns and aspirations, and always aiming to exceed expectations.

AWARD-WINNING PLANNING

As a testament to our firm's overall approach and project methodologies, Houseal Lavigne has frequently been recognized across the country by our peers and honored with awards and special recognition. Houseal Lavigne has received multiple awards for "Best Plan" from several state chapters of the American Planning Association (APA) in categories including comprehensive plan, strategic plan, community outreach, innovation, healthy communities, and best tool or practice. In addition, Houseal Lavigne was awarded the APA's 2014 National Planning Excellence Award for an Emerging Planning and Design Firm. Upon receiving the award, the APA recognized our innovative planning approach, targeted implementation strategies, creative and effective outreach, integration of emergent technologies, industry-leading graphic communication, and noted our firm's overall influence on the planning profession across the United States.

Very recently, in April of 2020, Houseal Lavigne's work with the Town of Morrisville received two awards for the use of technology as part of the Land Use Plan and Town Center 3D Scenarios Visualization. This includes the American Planning Association - Technology Division's Smart Cities Award and Esri's Special Achievement in GIS Award. Both awards recognized the innovative use of tools and software including CityEngine and Unreal Engine to visualize and analyze different land use scenarios for Morrisville's Town Center.

AWARDS

2021

Special Achievement in GIS Award:
Glen Ellyn 3D Immersive Model

CO APA General Planning Award:
Gunnison Comprehensive Plan

2020

Smart Cities Award, American Planning Association, Technology Division: **Land Use Plan/Town Center, Morrisville, NC**

Special Achievement in GIS Award (Esri): **Land Use Plan/Town Center Morrisville, NC**

2019

CO APA General Planning Award: **Aurora Places Comprehensive Plan**

2018

IL APA Healthy Active Community Award:
Healthy Chicago 2.0

ESRI Special Achievement in GIS Award:
Oshkosh Corporation World Headquarters / Lakeshore Redevelopment

VA APA - Commonwealth Plan of the Year Award: **Bristol Comprehensive Plan**

2017

IL APA - Outreach Award: **Envision Oak Park Comprehensive Plan**

2015

MI APA - Daniel Burnham Award (Best Plan): **Imagine Flint Master Plan**

2014

APA National Planning Excellence Award for an Emerging Planning & Design Firm

MI APA - Planning Excellence Award for Public Outreach: **Imagine Flint Master Plan**

IA APA - Daniel Burnham Award (Best Plan): **Coralville Community Plan**

2013

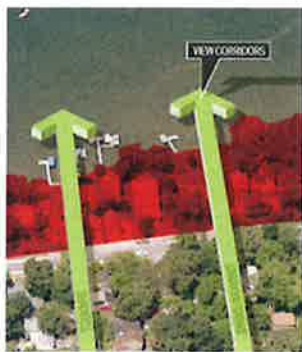
Kane County Plan of the Year Award: **City of St. Charles Comprehensive Plan**



Real-time scenario comparison via Unreal Engine for Morrisville, NC Town Center Plan.

APPROACH TO PLANNING

Our philosophy of community planning, visioning, goal setting, and implementation is built on a foundation of professional experience, sound planning and design practices, and a track record of award-winning projects. Our approach combines extensive community outreach and participation, highly illustrative and user-friendly maps and graphics, and utilization of available technologies. Our process will help establish a community vision, set community goals, and foster community consensus. Our approach to this assignment will include and be guided by the following core principles, which will allow us to successfully engage the community, develop viable and visionary solutions, and comprehensively respond to local issues and needs.



Focus on Urban Planning and Community Development

Houseal Lavigne specializes in community planning, urban design, and economic development. It is our focus, it is our passion, and it is our area of expertise. We are a specialized urban planning firm whose efforts are not diluted or compromised by bureaucracy or competing interests. Our focus and size allow us to provide the creativity, flexibility, and responsiveness needed to meet our clients' needs without wasting precious resources.



Foundation of Experience

Houseal Lavigne has extensive experience in community planning, visioning and goal setting, implementation strategies, comprehensive planning, economic development studies, urban design, and more. We have directed, managed, and assisted with similar planning assignments for communities across the country.



Engaging Community Outreach

One of our greatest strengths is our ability to design and conduct engaging and effective community outreach. It is a vital part of all of our planning projects, and we believe it is a necessary component of any successful planning process. It is important that all interested persons have the ability to participate in the planning process, and to know they have been heard and their opinion taken into consideration. We believe strongly in fostering a stewardship for the community and achieving a high level of community consensus for planning initiatives.



Illustrative Format and Quality Graphics

All our projects incorporate a highly illustrative and graphic approach to communicating planning and development policies and recommendations. We have developed a distinct design approach to urban planning and community development projects which we incorporate into all our projects. The results of this approach are reports and plans that are attractive, distinctive, and easy to use and understand.



Technology Integration

Integrating appropriate technologies can greatly improve the planning process and product. We specialize in the use of GIS and geospatial analysis, designing and hosting project websites, on-line surveys, interactive real-time polling, and utilizing 3-D rendering to improve planning and development concepts. Our maps and graphics are attractive and compatible with existing and developing information systems. When designed and managed appropriately, these technologies greatly improve communication and involvement with the public.



Vision, Creativity, and Innovation

We believe vision and creativity are among the most important components of good planning and design. Too often, vision and creativity are lacking in the planning process and final planning product. With the help of the community, we will establish a "Vision" that captures the local spirit and character, while presenting new ideas and concepts for consideration. Our fresh approach to planning and development will broaden the range of available options and maximize the potential of community resources.



Targeted Implementation

Identifying the "next steps" to be taken is an important part of any good plan. Plans are not meant to sit on a shelf gathering dust but should be used on a regular and on-going basis as a foundation for decision-making. Our plans identify key implementation steps that should be taken to "jump start" the ultimate realization of the Plan's vision and recommendations. Implementation steps outline the projects and actions to be taken and identify responsibilities, timing, and funding options.



Commitment to Client Satisfaction

Our Firm's primary focus is on client satisfaction. We pride ourselves on our professional relationships, reputation, and client references. We develop strong relationships with our clients and are often considered "an extension of staff." We are responsive to clients' concerns, available at any time to assist with unforeseen events and issues and are committed to doing whatever it takes to serve the client. Many of our "one-time" projects result in long-term on-going professional relationships with client communities.

GEODESIGN

Houseal Lavigne is a recognized leader in the emerging field of Geodesign. Our team approach is built on strong relationships, the exchange of ideas, and a commitment to the integration of technology. Our priorities are to do good, have fun, work hard, and provide responsive, visionary, and viable solutions to our clients and partners. Our comprehensive workflow leverages a number of different tools and software.

ArcGIS

ArcMap, ArcGIS Pro, and ArcGIS Online power our mapping and detailed geospatial analysis.

ArcGIS Urban & 3D Basemaps

We can help deploy ArcGIS Urban to deliver an immersive 3D experience that can orchestrate public and private investment, zoning, planning, and development. Don't have a 3D basemap? Not a problem. We can help you with that as well.

Business Analyst

Utilized by our team to understand an area's demographics and market potential to inform visionary, yet viable, plan recommendations.

Insights for ArcGIS

A data analytics workbench where we quickly visualize and analyze our GIS data using maps, charts, and tables.

SketchUp

From simple to detailed and cartoon to photorealistic, SketchUp is the backbone of our 3d illustrations.

CityEngine

Where we develop and share smart 3d models of cities, downtowns, corridors, and development opportunity sites.

Unreal Engine

The gaming engine we use to render complex 3d scenes in real-time and view online or using VR hardware.

Story Maps

Provides us the platform to create truly interactive and engaging digital plans and reports.

map.social

Our innovative map-based outreach platform is revolutionizing community engagement.

Drone2Map

Allows us to create orthomosaics, 3d meshes, and point clouds from drone-captured imagery.



esri Partner Network Gold

Partnership with ESRI

Houseal Lavigne is an Esri Business Partner, giving our team access to a variety of cutting-edge technologies and programs. This relationship has allowed our firm to explore how technology can support a data-driven and visually compelling approach to planning. Further, it has given Houseal Lavigne the opportunity to work with Esri in shaping best practices and defining how their services can be better integrated within the planning profession.

InDesign

Where we bring together maps, photos, and other digital assets and make our beautiful plans.

Illustrator

Infographics, vignettes, diagrams, and final touches to our maps are done in Illustrator.

Photoshop

Renderings, photo-real simulations, and post-production modifications to images, 3d models, and other graphics for our final plans.



Troyer Group



TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Planning, Design, and Engineering

We believe in the value of public spaces. With a diverse range of projects that include master planning and design of public spaces, parks and recreation, urban and residential districts, transportation, and natural environments, our design team continually strives for excellence. We believe that everything we do comes down to people and their experiences. In focusing on people, we provide contextual solutions that create economic, social, and environmental value; working with you to achieve your vision.

Troyer Group creates innovative, functional, sustainable, and contextual design solutions that integrate public needs and desires with the vision of municipal leadership. We have never limited ourselves to the problems we look to solve.

From large destinations to small renovations, from healing environments to environmental stewardship, and from transportation projects to active recreation—in all these things, Troyer Group seeks to make a positive economic, environmental, and social impact. It is this broad expertise that has enabled us to help make our clients more successful for over half a century.

Firm Information

Our multidisciplinary team of 60 employees including transportation engineers and planners, landscape architects, broadband and network design, as well as environmental coordination experts with extensive experience working on corridor reconstruction projects.

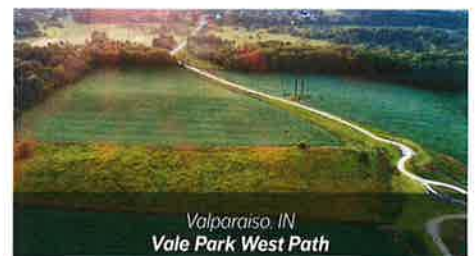
With a former public works director, several former municipal engineers, and dedicated traffic engineering staff, we have proven experience to meet the needs of this corridor project.

Three Regional Offices
Mishawaka, Grand Rapids,
and Fort Wayne

**Over 6,000 projects
completed for over 1,600
clients**

What We Do

- Master Planning
- Landscape Architecture
- Site Development
- Civil and Transportation Engineering
- Network Engineering and Broadband Planning
- Construction Services
- Grant Services



SECTION 2

DESCRIPTION OF APPROACH

Project Understanding

Munster, Indiana is a thriving community of 24,000, serving as a cultural and medical hub for the greater Northwest Indiana region. Located just 30 miles southeast of the Chicago Loop, the Town is composed primarily of high-quality single-family neighborhoods and served by an extensive park and trails system. Munster also boasts an excellent school system, with all five Munster Public Schools recognized as Indiana Blue Ribbon schools. The Town is home to two hospitals, the Center for Visual and Performing Arts, the Times of Northwest Indiana newspaper, and Pepsi Cola's Lake County facility. Access to parks, open space, jobs, and desirable housing contribute to a high quality of life that bolsters the Town's reputation as one of the most appealing communities in the Northwest Indiana region.

Houseal Lavigne is excited about the prospect of working with the Town of Munster to develop its new Comprehensive Plan. We understand the importance of establishing a consensus-based vision for the future and setting a clear direction for land use and development. Based on research into the Munster's history, knowledge of current issues, and a review of past plans, we have developed some initial observations regarding issues and opportunities we believe should be addressed through the new comprehensive planning process:

CONTINUING TO ATTRACT THE NEXT GENERATION

Munster is thriving in terms of employment, with residents enjoying a median household income of \$84,000 – about 20 percent higher than the Chicago region, and about 1.5 times higher than Indiana. The Comprehensive Plan should explore ways the Town can continue to attract the young professionals and families that add vitality to a community. Munster will need to continue its focus on amenities and quality of life considerations as well as housing, recreation and activities, healthy and safe community environments, quality schools, and proximity to jobs. The Comprehensive Plan should examine these variables and develop strategies aimed at continuing Munster's status as a wonderful place to live.

CAPITALIZING ON KEY CORRIDORS

Munster is known as "The Town Along the Ridge" due to its location at a point of the ancient shores of Lake Michigan which is today marked by Ridge Road. The Ridge Road corridor is of paramount importance, crossing the Munster community along with the major thoroughfares of 45th Street and Calumet Avenue. These corridors present unique challenges, but also provide the opportunities, visibility, access, and market for the Town's robust commercial base. The Comprehensive Plan must drill down in these corridor areas to fully leverage local commerce, character and sense of place, institutional and medical presence, and opportunity while minimizing the negative impacts of regional arterial rights of way and traffic.



MAINTAINING MUNSTER'S REPUTATION FOR RECREATION

Munster has ten parks, three lakes, a nine-hole golf course and driving range, eleven miles of bike paths, and an innovative public art and sculpture program. Centennial Park is a highlight with environmentally-friendly design elements adhering to LEED Silver guidelines. The Comprehensive Plan should provide a framework for ensuring parks, open spaces, and protected natural environments continue to offer world-class recreation and contribute to the environmental health of the Munster community.

LEVERAGING REGIONAL INVESTMENT

The new West Lake Corridor Project extension of the commuter South Shore Line will run from the Illinois-Indiana border in north Hammond to the Munster/Dyer border. Munster will benefit from two new stations – a terminal station at Main Street and a neighborhood-scale station at Ridge Road and Manor Avenue. Service from Munster to downtown Chicago will begin in 2025. The sizable investment is expected to boost local economic development and strengthen connections to the Chicago market. The Comprehensive Plan should provide strategies for investment in the areas around the new stations, establishing these areas as lively, transit-oriented areas that capitalize on regional access while remaining cohesive with the look and feel of Munster. This should include integrating and building from the recommendations of the recently adopted Calumet-Ridge Streetscape Plan.

INVESTING IN FUNDAMENTAL FACILITIES AND SYSTEMS

Reviewing the condition and capacity of Munster's water, stormwater, and sanitary sewer infrastructure in collaboration with the Public Works Department will be paramount to the community's ability to meet future demands. Many communities in Northwest Indiana are dealing with the long-term implication of EPA mandates, and with utilities being some of the largest energy-consuming entities within any community, long-term budget impacts will also be an important consideration. The Comprehensive Plan should address the utility system with contemporary solutions that meet the Town's budget and take into consideration planned transportation infrastructure projects to help minimize disruption to the community and reduce potential project costs.

LEVELING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

In addition to traditional municipal utilities, broadband infrastructure is becoming an increasing area of need, especially considering the impacts of the COVID pandemic. Purdue's Digital Divide Index shows both low and median download/upload speeds for Lake County though the total index is ranked as "Medium". Analysis at the Comprehensive Plan level will help Munster plan for future needs and take advantage of Federal funding for high-speed internet for its residents and municipal facilities.



Scope of Work

Houseal Lavigne recognizes the importance of using the planning process to establish community consensus and foster a sense of stewardship for a new Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Munster. Our scope of work ensures that Town staff, residents, business owners, key stakeholders, community leaders, and elected officials are engaged throughout the planning process, helping establish a visionary, purposeful, and implementable plan to guide Munster's future.

Our approach is based on community engagement and bolstered by a thorough analysis of existing conditions to provide a concise and accurate assessment of the community's issues and opportunities. Our process includes the development of plan recommendations and implementation strategies that are actionable, fiscally grounded, and rooted in citizen engagement.

Our proposed scope of work is carefully tailored to align with each task identified in the RFP. The final plan deliverable will meet or exceed all state requirements and guidelines outlined in Indiana State Code Section 36-7-4-500. We will work closely with Town staff and officials to further refine this process, ensuring that we meet all local needs and requirements.

Flexible Public Participation Approach

Our responsive approach allows us to be flexible and maximize resources spent on creative planning and delivery of services. All workshops, meetings, and working sessions identified in the scope of work will ideally be in person. However, given evolving circumstances around COVID-19 and social distancing restrictions on gathering, public engagement can be conducted virtually if the need arises. Houseal Lavigne has developed a full suite of virtual activities using a variety of platforms to assure effective and engaging outreach and productive and meaningful meetings and working sessions. We can pivot as conditions dictate and stay on project budget and timeline using platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Facebook Live, Poll Everywhere, and more. We are confident the suite of online engagement tools we provide will allow us to obtain the community input required to provide Munster with the Comprehensive Plan it needs.

TASK 1: PROJECT INITIATION

To "kick off" the planning process on the right foot, we will conduct meetings with Town staff, the Plan Commission, and the Town Council before undertaking other community outreach activities. This approach allows the Consultant Team and the various Town designated individuals to discuss roles, responsibilities, scope, and community issues and opportunities, to ensure the project gets off to a good start. It is anticipated that the meetings in Task 1 (1d-1g) take place on the same day.

1a: Staff Coordination Call

The Project Team will host a web meeting or conference call with Town Staff to confirm dates and times for the official staff kickoff and department head meetings. On this call, we will also discuss data needs, clarify any outstanding matters, and review the formation of an ad hoc Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. To ensure consistent communication and coordination the Project Team manager will conduct regular and "as-needed" conference calls and/or web progress meetings with Town Staff throughout the planning process.

Guiding the Process: The ad hoc Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) will provide a public face to the planning process and demonstrate a commitment on behalf of the Town to seek meaningful input. The CPAC should serve as a community sounding board, meeting at key points along the process to discuss issues and overall planning direction and provide feedback for consideration by the various adopting bodies. Participation by members of the Town Council and the Plan Commission on the CPAC will help develop champions for the plan ensure that the plan update and visioning process moves smoothly. The Project Team will conduct meetings with the CPAC at key intervals throughout the planning process.

1b: Community Education – Branding the Process

As part of project initiation, branding the plan will garner support for the planning process and pique public interest in the Comprehensive Plan. The graphic design and communications experts on the Project Team will use their expertise in community-based marketing to create an "identity" for the planning process as well as the plan document. Collateral such as postcards, short-form surveys, and informational posters can be developed for use by Town staff at pop-up engagement events to better promote the plan and inform and engage the community.

1c: Data Collection

As part of the project initiation task, the Project Team will coordinate with the Town to collect a variety of datasets related to land use and development. The data collection task focuses on GIS data needs including, but not limited to parcels, building footprints, zoning districts and overlays, community facilities, infrastructure data, parks, traffic volumes, sidewalk inventory, traffic signals, bike routes, and trails.

1d: Staff Kick-off Meeting and Orientation Tour of the Town

We intend to function as a unified and integrated team alongside Town staff and officials. A kick-off meeting will be held with the Town Staff assigned to the Comprehensive Plan project. This first face-to-face meeting will allow us to 1) review the project scope of work; 2) discuss project goals, timeline, and key deliverables; 3) share information about potential issues and areas of concern; 4) review administrative procedures; and 5) clarify any outstanding matters. This meeting will conclude with a staff-led tour of the community to better understand the Town's existing conditions and local context.

1e: Department Heads Meeting

Following the Town Staff Kick-off Meeting, the Project Team will meet with key members of Town departments including Community Development, Park Facilities, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and the Police and Fire Departments. Comprehensive Plan recommendations will have bearing on a wide variety of Town policies and support from all Town departments will be essential to the implementation of the plan.

1f: Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee Project Initiation Meeting

A project initiation meeting will be held with the CPAC to set the foundation for the planning process and review and discuss the overall direction and policy issues facing the community. The purpose of this meeting will be to (a) discuss the committee's role for the Comprehensive Plan update; (b) review overall project objectives and work program; (c) review a preliminary schedule for the project; and (d) begin the process of identifying key stakeholders.

1g: Elected and Appointed Officials Roundtable Discussion

The Project Team will facilitate a roundtable discussion with Munster elected and appointed officials to introduce the project team and solicit their concerns and aspirations for the community. As the community's policymakers, it is important that the Town Council and Plan Commission have a chance to communicate and discuss their issues and concerns with the Project Team and each other at the beginning of the process. Recognizing that these bodies meet on separate nights, the Project Team proposes holding a special work session and conducting these on the same night.

The primary purpose of this work session is to gather ideas from Town officials, ensuring that the Plan accurately captures the shared sentiments of the leaders of the community. This work session will provide a unique opportunity to jointly discuss the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan process, the overall direction and policy issues facing the community, and the future vision of the community.

TASK 2: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Anticipating a high level of participation from an active and engaged community, our proposed outreach processes for the Comprehensive Plan include both traditional (face-to-face) and web-based activities to obtain the broadest levels of participation possible. Outreach summaries will be prepared for each public engagement activity.

2a: Project Website

At the beginning of the project, we will design and host an interactive project website linked to the Town's existing website. We are committed to using the internet to maximize the participation and communication between the Town and its residents. A project website provides a home base for Comprehensive Plan information. The website will promote and popularize the planning process and will be used to post project schedules and meeting dates; display graphics, interactive maps, and draft documents; address frequently asked questions; host map.social; and provide an online community questionnaire.

2b: Online Community Questionnaire

We will prepare an online questionnaire for the residents and business owners of Munster to offer a community-wide opinion on a range of topics and issues. The business component of the questionnaire will include the opportunity to provide specific input on those issues and concerns most important to the Town's business community. The online community questionnaire will be easily accessible on the project website. At the close of the questionnaire response period, we will review and summarize results in the Existing Conditions Report in Task 3 as a gauge of community issues and key themes.

2c: map.social (Online Map-based Engagement Platform)

The project website will feature map.social, a web-based community issues mapping tool. Developed by Houseal Lavigne, this tool allows users to identify, map, and comment on geographic areas of concern and valued community amenities. map.social simplifies the mapping process and familiarizes users with all areas of the Munster community in a manner that is exciting, interactive, and effective. Input from users allows us to create a composite map of community issues to assist with the establishment of community goals and policies. The Town can publicize the map.social link using email lists, social media, and postcards.

2d: Key Stakeholder Interviews (up to 10)

Key stakeholder interviews allow us to gain insight into the community that we might otherwise not be able to obtain. Up to ten confidential interviews will be conducted to obtain additional information regarding local issues and opportunities. The Project Team will work with Town Staff and elected officials to identify those to be interviewed. We recommend a broad sampling of interviewees who may possess unique perspectives or special insights into the community. Interviewees could include selected property owners, new or lifelong residents, local business owners, school district officials, adjacent communities, and representatives from other government agencies, institutions, and/or civic groups. The interviews will be conducted in-person during scheduled visits related to other outreach events or via telephone/virtual conference as needed.

2e: Business Community Workshop

This workshop will be targeted specifically to business owners and operators, developers, and Munster's corporate citizens as an important stakeholder group. The purpose of the workshop is to establish a dialogue and obtain feedback from those members of the business community that have a unique insight and perspective and whose assistance and involvement are crucial to the Plan's ultimate success. The workshop will be scheduled to coincide with other in-person engagement activities and can be conducted in the early morning to minimize impacts to business owners. This workshop can be conducted as part of a regularly scheduled event where numerous property owners and business owners are typically in attendance, such as a Munster Chamber of Commerce meeting.

2f: Community Visioning Workshop

The purpose of the Community Visioning Workshop is to allow residents and stakeholders to tell the Project Team what they think before plans and recommendations are crafted. The Community Visioning Workshop will involve the Project Team, Town staff, the CPAC, elected and appointed officials, and members of the community.

The workshop will begin with a group exercise where participants will work together to identify planning priorities, issues, and opportunities. Participants will then break out into small groups for a mapping exercise where they will put pen to paper and work to develop their "vision" for the future of the community. The workshop will conclude with a general agreement regarding the community's issues and opportunities, key planning themes and principles, the long-term image and identity of Munster, and the projects and improvements that will be desirable in the future.

2g: Community Engagement Key Themes

Task 2 will conclude in a summary of the key themes and takeaways from the initial community outreach tools and interviews. The summary will be incorporated into the Existing Conditions Report delivered as part of Task 3.

TASK 3: EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

This task will include the preparation of an Existing Conditions Report that will inventory and provide a concise analysis of existing conditions, document existing land uses, identify key thoroughfares and community facilities, and provide an economic and demographic profile. It will be based on issues and opportunities identified in outreach, past plans and studies, information provided by the Town and partner agencies, feedback from community service providers, and reconnaissance conducted by the Project Team. We intend to move through this task efficiently, reserving project budget and resources for visioning, planning, and action.

3a: Past Plans and Studies Summary

We will review existing plans and policies, including the following:

- 2010 Comprehensive Plan
- 2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- 2021 Calumet-Ridge Road Streetscaping Plan
- Munster Zoning Ordinance

This review process will help determine 1) recently adopted Town projects and policies that need to be reflected in the Comprehensive Plan, 2) status of implementation alongside change within the community that has occurred since the adoption of previous plans, 3) conflicts between or deficiencies within existing plans, and 4) the validity of previously collected data. The Project Team will work with Town staff to identify any additional current studies and reports that should be reviewed as part of this task.

3b: Demographic Analysis and Economic Trends

The project team will prepare a demographic analysis of the Munster community that will include an analysis of trends in population, households, income, age, labor force, and employment. The Project Team will collaborate with staff to identify comparison communities to serve as benchmarks for the Town. This analysis will be summarized and presented with an economic profile of market conditions that will provide an overview of supply and demand trends for residential and commercial land uses.

3c: Existing Conditions Analysis

We will inventory existing land use, transportation facilities, parks and environmental features, and community facilities and prepare a map comprised of all parcels within Munster. This task will provide a foundational understanding of the Munster community. The Existing Conditions analysis will include an evaluation of the following components, each presented in the Existing Conditions Report with text, maps, and graphics where appropriate.

Land Use and Development

Field reconnaissance, aerial imagery assessment, and a review of the Town's GIS data will be used to inventory land use in the Town. An Existing Land Use Map that identifies all existing land uses within the Town will be prepared. Land use and development issues and opportunities will be presented and assessed in this section.

Zoning and Development Regulations

A preliminary diagnosis of current zoning will be undertaken to identify alignment with existing land use and needed areas of improvement.

Transportation and Mobility

Working with Troyer Group, the Project Team will prepare an overview of vehicular transportation facilities within Munster. Our analysis will build existing regional planned new infrastructure projects and include an aerial plan view of existing roadway configurations, access drive locations, and modal routes including truck routes, thoroughfares and collectors, bicycle facilities, and sidewalks. Troyer Group will provide an existing vehicular system analysis using the GIS data and traffic data inventory available from the Town, Lake County, and INDOT. The areas of analysis will include congestion management, commuter travel time, pavement condition rating if available, traffic speeds and level of service (LOS), and existing corridor geometry.

Bicycle Traffic Analysis

Troyer Group will conduct a Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) analysis. The LTS methodology is used to determine how comfortable a street is for the average person riding a bicycle – an effective way to quantify how well a community's street network serves people today and to identify the need for bikeway improvements. Factors used in the analysis include vehicle speeds, traffic volume, and pavement width. The team will rely on open-source data provided for this analysis that may be supplemented with data from the Town of Munster.

Pedestrian Network Analysis

Pedestrian Generating Zones (PGZs) will be identified across the Munster community. This analysis involves examining elements like Walk-Score, transit stop locations, curb ramp, and sidewalk locations, as well as residential and commercial densities. PGZs will help inform and prioritize recommendations for the on- and off-street pedestrian pathway system.

Transit Analysis

Troyer Group will identify gaps in the multimodal transportation network of Munster, anticipating the potential service expansion of Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GTPC) to support the stations of the South Shore Line's new West Lake branch.

Community Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure

Public and semi-public facilities and services will be inventoried and assessed regarding location, capacity, future needs, and an online **Facilities and Services Questionnaire** will be developed and sent to all facility and service providers in the community including but not limited to police, fire, public works, school districts, and parks and recreation providers.

3d: Existing Conditions Report

The Project Team will compile the results from community engagement activities and the existing conditions analysis into an **Existing Conditions Report** in memorandum format. The report will include existing conditions, issues, and opportunities that will be addressed in the new Comprehensive Plan. The Existing Conditions Report is an interim deliverable collecting and presenting data and information gathered in Tasks 1 through 3 to Town staff.

3e: Staff Review and Discussion

Town staff and the Project Team will review the Existing Conditions Report ahead of its distribution to the CPAC. We will also work to ensure that substantive comments provided by Town Staff integrate into the ensuing Plan development. This meeting will be a conference call/screen share with Town staff.

3f: Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

The Project Team will meet with and present the Existing Conditions Report to the CPAC to gather feedback and input. The Project Team will work with staff to ensure that this meeting is conducted during the same trip as the Community Visioning and Business Community Workshops.

TASK 4: VISION, GOALS, AND PRELIMINARY LAND USE FRAMEWORK

The Comprehensive Plan needs to establish an overall "vision statement" for the future of Munster that can provide focus and direction with goals or plan principles based on analysis and themes identified during community outreach. The vision and goals, combined with a Preliminary Land Use Framework to direct place-based recommendations for future growth and change, will serve as the "cornerstone" of the consensus-building process and provide focus and direction for subsequent planning activities.

4a: Vision Statement and Goals

The Project Team will synthesize all feedback received during the previous tasks of the planning process and prepare a vision statement and goals for the Town of Munster. The **Vision Statement** will be prepared based on feedback from the community visioning workshop, community outreach activities, and observations garnered from the Existing Conditions Report. Plan goals (presented as Plan Principles in the Town's 2010 Comprehensive Plan) will also be developed to provide a more specific focus and direction for planning recommendations. As a starting point, we can assess and update the Plan Principles from the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. Working with Town staff, the Project Team can develop additional goals that were not part of the previous plan.

4b: Preliminary Land Use Framework

Based on the outcome of the previous tasks, the **Preliminary Land Use Framework**, including the **Draft Future Land Use Map**, will provide policies and recommendations for all land use areas in the Town, including residential areas and neighborhoods, commercial, mixed use, and industrial areas, parks and recreation areas, open space, and public and semi-public uses.

The Preliminary Land Use Framework will form the core of the Land Use Plan Element and will identify and address a range of land use topics such as desired development patterns and land use compatibility issues and mitigation strategies. This first core element will provide overarching guidance to all other land use related components of the Comprehensive Plan, including the preliminary draft elements developed in Task 5.

Identification of Potential Catalyst Sites

Based on outreach, field reconnaissance, and our assessment of existing conditions, we will identify potential catalyst sites for review and selection. The preliminary list of sites will be evaluated with Town staff along with the CPAC, and be refined to identify sites for more detailed work in Task 5b.

4c: Staff Review and Discussion

Staff and the Project Team will review the Vision, Goals, Preliminary Land Use Framework, and potential catalyst sites ahead of distribution to the CPAC. Comments provided by Town Staff will be integrated into the Vision Statement and Goals distributed to the CPAC for their review. This meeting will be a conference call/screen share with Town Staff.

4d: Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

The Project Team will meet with and present the Vision, Goals, and Preliminary Land Use Framework to the CPAC to gather feedback and input.

TASK 5: PRELIMINARY FRAMEWORK PLANS

This task will entail the preparation of preliminary Town-wide frameworks, policies, and recommendations for core comprehensive plan elements. The Draft Framework Plans prepared in this task will reflect the Preliminary Land Use Framework, Vision, and Goals developed in previous steps of the planning process. As part of Task 5, Preliminary Subarea Plans will be developed.

5a: Preliminary Frameworks

Collectively, the following framework plans will identify trends that should be considered in planning for the future and address issues identified by the community, Town staff, and stakeholders. Although the framework plans will accommodate appropriate and desirable development and improvements, all framework plans will be respectful and supportive of the community's vision and goals. All framework plans will be highly illustrative and graphically compelling. Maps, illustrations, and visualizations will be utilized to convey planning and development concepts and recommendations.

While the framework plans will be refined with staff at the outset of the process, based on our preliminary understanding of the Munster community and the requirements outlined in the RFP, the following will be prepared:

Housing

The **Housing Framework** will focus on neighborhood livability and will prioritize maintaining and improving the Town's established and mature neighborhoods, guiding infill development and reinvestment with a desirable mix of diverse residential unit types, including mixed use and multifamily developments. The framework will provide recommendations for density location, type, age, and condition of housing; owner and renter occupancy; diversity and affordability of housing to meet the current and future needs of Munster's residents; and strategies for housing near future commuter rail station areas.

Economic Development

The **Economic Development** framework will provide detail and guidance regarding Munster's commercial and industrial areas, including the areas around the future commuter rail station areas, with policies designed to strengthen employment, job creation, business attraction and retention, and to provide and grow a diverse and thriving tax base for the Town. Place-based recommendations will focus on the Town's older existing commercial areas, planned new commercial areas, and light industrial areas. The economic development framework will include a section providing policies and recommendations to strengthen Munster's **Arts and Cultural Resources**, fully leveraging the community's rich offerings.

Transportation

The **Transportation** framework will feature a thoroughfare plan with a focus on the coordination and optimization of street network patterns for all modes of travel within the Town. The framework will include recommendations for on- and off-street pedestrian pathways, strategies to address gaps and improve connectivity in the multimodal transportation network, and strategies to improve safety and calm traffic along major thoroughfares.

The framework will incorporate "Complete Streets" principles to ensure effective mobility environments for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and commuter rail users. Recommendations for vehicular routes will emphasize roadway safety and traffic efficiency optimization opportunities as well as address high-risk congestion mitigation strategies. Recommendations for walking and bicycling routes will emphasize the use of "low-stress streets" such as collectors and local streets and shared-use paths when available.

Transportation Project Prioritization and Funding

Preliminary costs and potential project prioritization for vehicular corridor improvements, intersection improvements, and recommended bike/pedestrian infrastructure routes will be prepared. A final list and map of recommendations prioritized into short-, medium-, and long-term improvements will be produced.

Community Facilities and Infrastructure

The **Community Facilities and Infrastructure** framework will identify and provide policies and recommendations for municipal facilities, services, and intergovernmental coordination and cooperation with entities like Hammond Sanitary District and other service providers. This framework is designed to help plan for anticipated capital needs and include strategies that focus on infrastructure improvements such as stormwater and sanitary sewer infrastructure to support the existing population while ensuring new development and growth can also be supported.

Municipal Facilities

Knowing that Munster is looking to address its current facility inventory and assess the adequacy of existing municipal facilities that include the Town Hall, Fire Stations, Police Station, and Public Works, our team brings practical experience to the planning process. Working with communities of similar size, we also understand the challenging dynamic facing municipal departments, including rising operational costs, facility improvement needs, and challenging recruitment. From improvement recommendations to existing facilities to expansion planning, the Comprehensive Plan will help meet contemporary and future demands in a fiscally responsible manner.

Parks and Open Space

The **Parks and Open Space** framework will inventory and identify trails, greenways, environmental protection areas, open space, and parks and recreation areas. The framework will provide policies and recommendations for access and connectivity between parks, natural areas, and multi-use trails, ensuring these important amenities are preserved, maintained, and expanded to serve the needs of the Munster community.

5b: Catalyst Site Concepts (2-3 Sites)

What will new development look like around the new commuter rail station, and how will it interface with established residential areas? How will a vacant site be programmed or redeveloped to take advantage the prominence of the Calumet Avenue Medical District, anchored by Franciscan Health and Community Hospital? These are questions that can benefit from detailed planning and a conceptual graphic component. To illustrate planning concepts and visualize what could occur on key sites as a result of the Comprehensive Plan, sketch plans for potential site configurations will be developed for the catalyst sites selected as part of Task 4b.

The sketch development concepts will establish use programs, parcel division, lot/building orientation and layout, parking layout, access, circulation, buffering, landscaping, and open space/detention. The sketch concept plans will also explore different mixes and approaches to assist in attaining the best use and desired development characteristics within the planning area. The number of concepts and level of detail each site concept can provide will depend on the size of the site and the complexity of the issues addressed.

5c: Staff Review and Discussion

Staff and the Project Team will review the Preliminary Framework Plans and Catalyst Site Concepts ahead of distribution to the CPAC. This meeting will be a conference call/screen share with Town Staff.

5d: Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

The Project Team will conduct a meeting with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to review and discuss the Preliminary Framework Plans, including preliminary policies, plan recommendations, and initial draft maps and graphics.

TASK 6: DRAFT AND FINAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Based on the previous tasks in the planning process, the draft version of both Plans will be prepared and presented for review.

6a: Draft Comprehensive Plan Document

Based on feedback received in Task 5 the Project Team will prepare the draft Comprehensive Plan document that synthesizes the findings and recommendations contained in these deliverables. The plan will be user-friendly, highly illustrative, and visually compelling. Concise, well-written text will be combined with attractive and easy-to-understand maps, graphics, illustrations, and photographs to effectively communicate the Plan's policies and recommendations. The new **Town of Munster Comprehensive Plan** will meet or exceed all state requirements for comprehensive planning, including all required elements as identified in the Town's RFP.

Implementation Plan

The new Comprehensive Plan will include a practical and actionable implementation plan describing the actions required to bring the Comprehensive Plan's goals, policies, and strategies to fruition. Implementation tools will include short-, medium-, and long-range strategies and actions, priority improvement projects, potential capital improvement projects, funding sources and implementation methods, timing and prioritization, and general administration of the Comprehensive Plan.

6b: Staff Review and Discussion

The Project Team will submit the draft Comprehensive Plan and document to Town staff in electronic format for final review. It is anticipated that the plan will be subjected to a two- or three-stage review process.

6c: Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

A final meeting will be conducted with the CPAC to review and reach an agreement on the draft Comprehensive Plan document before proceeding to the public review and adoption process. Appropriate revisions to the draft Plan will be made based on feedback from the CPAC and the final Comprehensive Plan will be prepared for the Community Open House presentation.

6d: Community Open House

Members of the Project Team, along with Town staff, will be present for a community open house to allow residents and community stakeholders the opportunity to examine, discuss, and comment on the contents of the draft Comprehensive Plan document. The Project Team will be available throughout the community open house to present material, answer questions, and get feedback before initiating the approval process.

6e: Final Draft Plan for Public Hearing and Adoption

The Project Team will present the draft Comprehensive Plan document at one (1) Plan Commission meeting (public hearing) and one (1) Town Council meeting.

6f: Final Comprehensive Plan Document

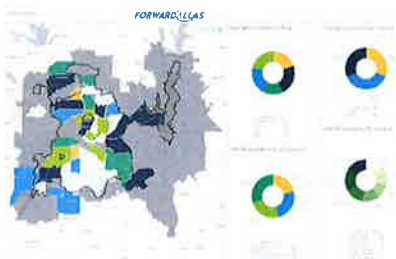
Following the community open house and presentations, the Project Team will work with Town Staff to revise the draft Comprehensive Plan. It is anticipated that up to two additional review cycles may be necessary to incorporate any final changes.

6g: Interactive Web-based Plan (OPTIONAL)

The planning process will yield a traditional "long-form" plan for printing, on-screen viewing, and easy distribution, searching, and navigation. In addition, we can leverage ArcGIS Online StoryMaps to create an "app," providing an interactive "executive summary" version of the Comprehensive Plan. Combined with photos, text, websites, and other media, ArcGIS Online will power interactive maps that can be queried and explored, providing an engaging way to experience the Comprehensive Plan. Content will be interwoven with maps, visuals, and interactive content that simplifies navigation between related, cross-referenced components of the plan. This step will take place after the Comprehensive Plan is adopted, as it cannot be completed before adoption.



Community Engagement Efforts



Community outreach and citizen participation are the cornerstones of our planning process. We want to hear from the whole community, and our proposed outreach process includes a variety of engagement activities to obtain the broadest levels of participation. Engagement is included throughout the planning process, first providing the initial participation efforts, and then laying the foundation for the remaining steps. The public participation approach we propose for the assignment has been outlined below.

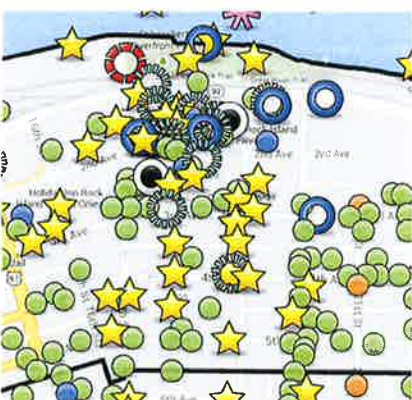
PROJECT INITIATION MEETINGS

Initiation meetings with Town staff and the Department Heads will ensure that from the beginning, the process benefits from collaboration with the people who know the most about Munster.



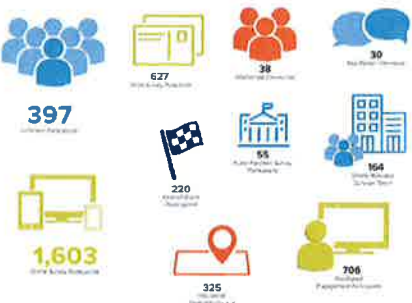
BRANDING AND COLLATERAL

The Project Team will create an "identity" for the planning process and the plan document. Branded collateral can be developed for use by Town staff to better promote the plan and inform and engage the community. Branding with a clear identity and color palette will carry through the process to ensure a cohesive theme runs throughout.



MAP.SOCIAL

Specifically developed by Houseal Lavigne, this award-winning web-based engagement tool allows participants to identify, map, and comment on Munster's areas of concern and valued community amenities. map.social simplifies the mapping process and familiarizes residents with all areas of the community in a manner that is exciting, interactive, and effective.



COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

The Community Questionnaire is designed as a quick and straightforward way to participate. In about 10 minutes, anyone can provide feedback that will be reflected in the Comprehensive Plan. The questionnaire complements other outreach activities – it is not the only way to participate, but it is easy to share widely.

ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS ROUNDTABLE

As the community's policymakers, it is important that the Plan Commission and Town Council talk about issues and concerns with the Project Team at the beginning of the process. The Project Team will facilitate a roundtable discussion with the Town's elected and appointed officials to discuss their aspirations for the community.



CPAC MEETINGS (5)

The CPAC will function as a critical touchpoint throughout the project, shepherding the Comprehensive Plan from start to completion. The Project Team will be prepared to meet with the CPAC at several points in the process to review, discuss, and refine project deliverables and concepts.

KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS (10)

Key stakeholder interviews and small focus groups provide great insight into the community. Interviewees could include property owners, new or lifelong residents, local business owners, school district officials, regional organizations, representatives from the hospitals or other major employers, representatives from bicycle or park advocacy organizations, and more.

BUSINESS WORKSHOP

Munster's business and property owners have a unique perspective and set of needs that are essential to understand. A workshop specifically for these individuals and groups will establish a dialogue and obtain critical feedback. Live, real-time polling can be used as an effective way to get the group talking and reacting in a fun and engaging way.

COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP

A community-wide workshop at the beginning of the planning process will get residents and stakeholders motivated to participate in the development of the plan. This event is a chance for all Munster residents to get involved and build consensus regarding the community's future. The workshop will educate and inspire participants with fun issues and opportunities exercises and optional live polling will ensure the event is a success.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

Before adoption, the new Draft Comprehensive Plan will be presented at a community open house so the public can examine, discuss, and comment on the contents of the draft document. The Project Team will be available throughout the community open house to present material, answer questions, and get feedback before initiating the approval process.

