



PLAN COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

To: Members of the Plan Commission

From: Sergio Mendoza, Planning Director

Meeting Date: November 18, 2025

Agenda Item: PC 25-020

Application Type: Development Plan

Hearing: Public Hearing

Summary: Applicant is requesting consideration of a Development Plan for a 10 tennis court complex at Community Park adjacent the Munster Community Pool at 8839 Calumet Avenue.

Applicant: Jim Glascott, Engineer WT Group AEC

Property Address: 8839 Columbia Avenue

Current Zoning: CZ – Civic Zone (Community Park)

Adjacent Zoning:
North: CZ – Civic Zone (Babe Ruth Fields)
South: CZ – Civic Zone (Community Pool)
East: CZ – Civic Zone (STOM HS)
West: CZ – Civic Zone (Community Park)

Applicant Requesting: Approve

Actions Required: Development Plan Review
Findings of Fact

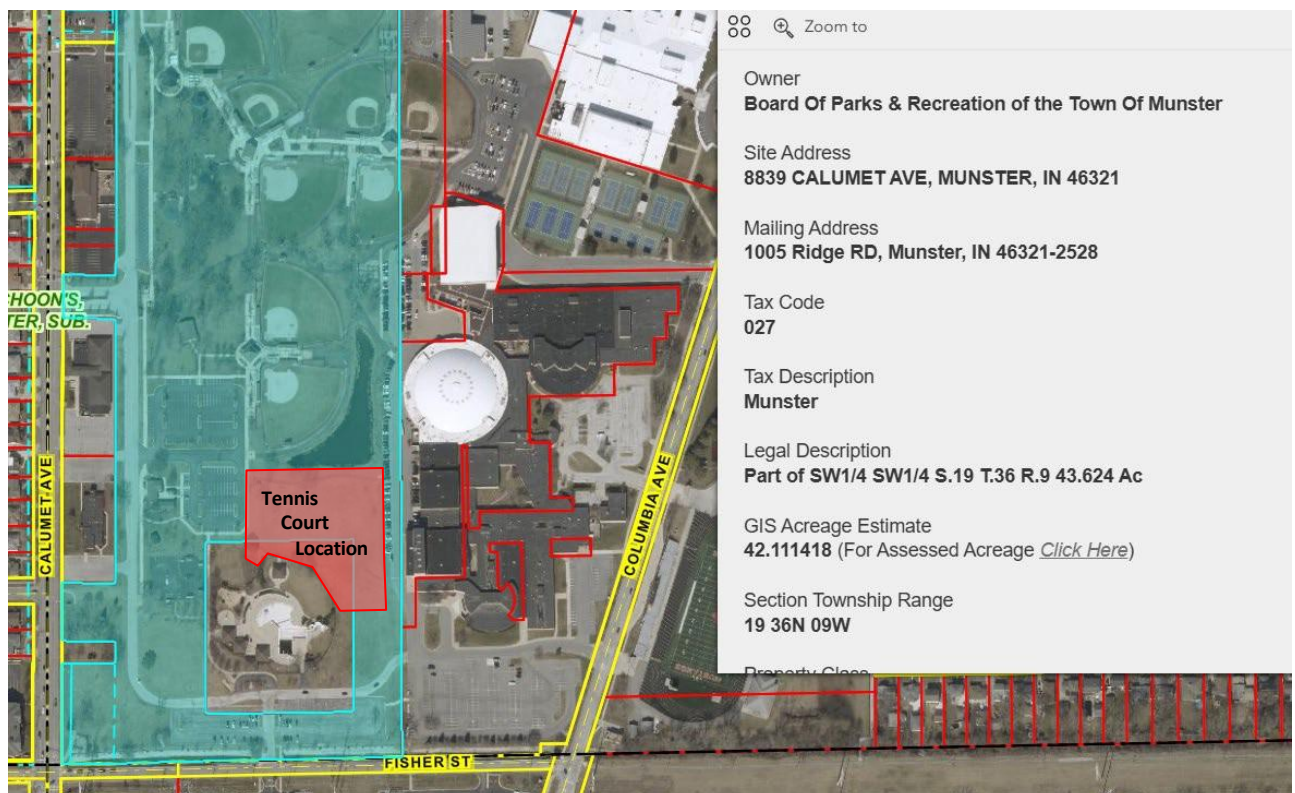
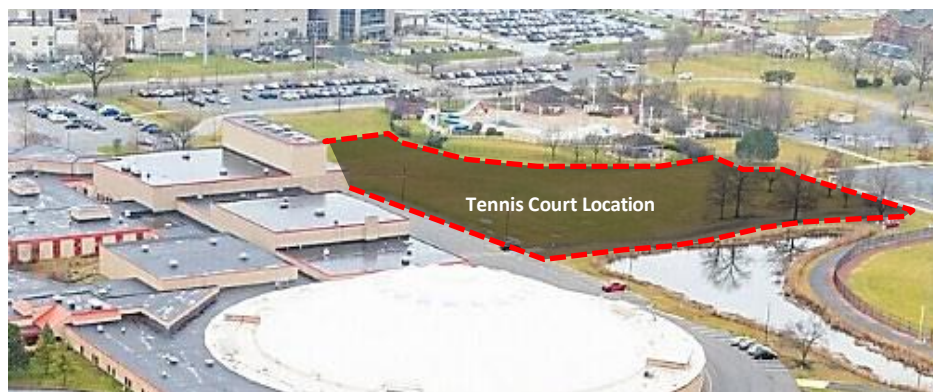
Staff Recommendation: Motion to Defer for Stormwater Review Report
Review of SECTION 26-6.804. G. 5.

Attachments:

1. Exhibit A: Application
2. Exhibit B: Narrative
3. Exhibit C: Survey
4. Exhibit D: Stormwater
5. Exhibit E: Arch Plans
6. Exhibit F: Eng Plans
7. Exhibit G Photometric
8. Exhibit H Lease Agreement

PROJECT LOCATION

The site of the proposed variance is located in Community Park, generally located northeast of the Community Pool, and west of Munster Highschool; between Columbia Avenue, Calumet Avenue, and north of Fisher Street.



PROJECT SUMMARY

The School Town of Munster has entered into a lease agreement with the Town of Munster Parks and Recreation Department to construct and operate a new ten-court tennis complex at Munster Community Park, located directly west of Munster High School. The proposed facility will include bleachers, an elevated viewing platform, and new concrete walkways connecting the existing parking lot to the east with the asphalt path to the north.

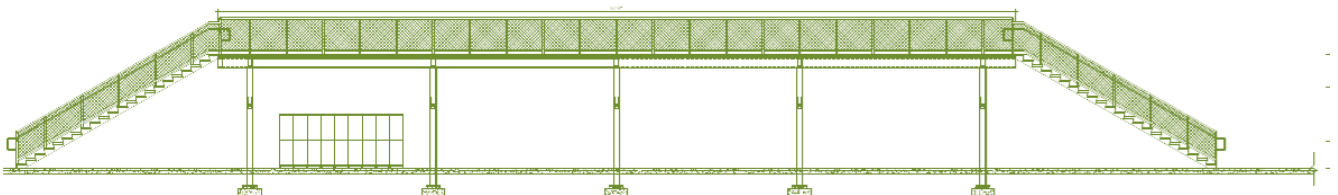
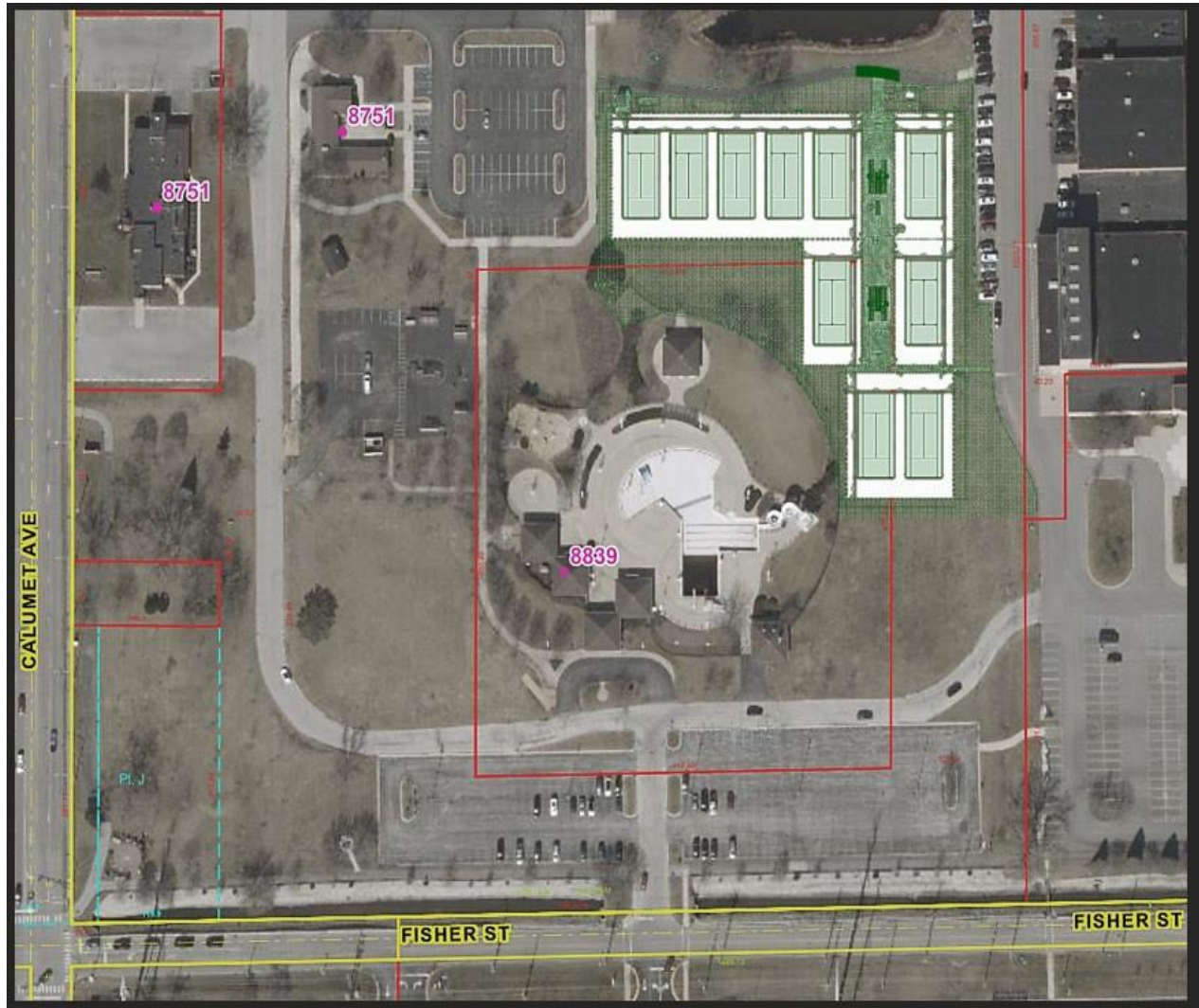
The project also incorporates underground stormwater storage beneath the northern courts, as well as at-grade detention basin improvements on the southwest portion of the site, which will discharge to Schoon Ditch. In addition, the applicant is requesting a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals to install more than 2,000 linear feet of 10-foot-high chain link fencing with screening, along with 11 stadium light structures at a maximum height of 50 feet, utilizing off-road stadium light fixtures with a minimum 4000K color temperature.

At the October 14, 2025 Plan Commission meeting, the Commissioners asked if additional parking is planned, if signage plan is available, and if there will be any landscaping improvements. Questions were also raised regarding whether the tennis courts would be available for public use during off-hours, and if soil borings had been completed, and whether parents of the tennis players had been consulted. Staff added that the Stormwater Management Plan is currently under engineering review, which includes underground storage and detention ponds. Staff also recommended enhanced landscaping between the parking lot and the first set of tennis courts, as well as a trail or walkway connecting the north entrance sidewalk and the proposed south entrance sidewalk to support code provisions encouraging sports fields to be defined through landscaping features such as paths, trees, and lawns where building frontage is absent.

The applicant stated that the 10 courts will be constructed using a post-tension system to enhance durability, and that raised viewing platforms and bleachers will be installed between the court bays. The applicant noted that the court design was developed with input from various stakeholders and industry professionals. Landscaping is being coordinated with the project architect, with particular attention to the northern pedestrian pathway. The applicant further reported that soil borings have been completed and that stormwater will be managed through an underground storm trap system beneath the northwest courts, supplemented by at-grade dry storage in the southwest portion of the site. The applicant acknowledged that variances are being requested for fence height and stadium lighting, and that windscreen graphics are under consideration but would require a future variance application.

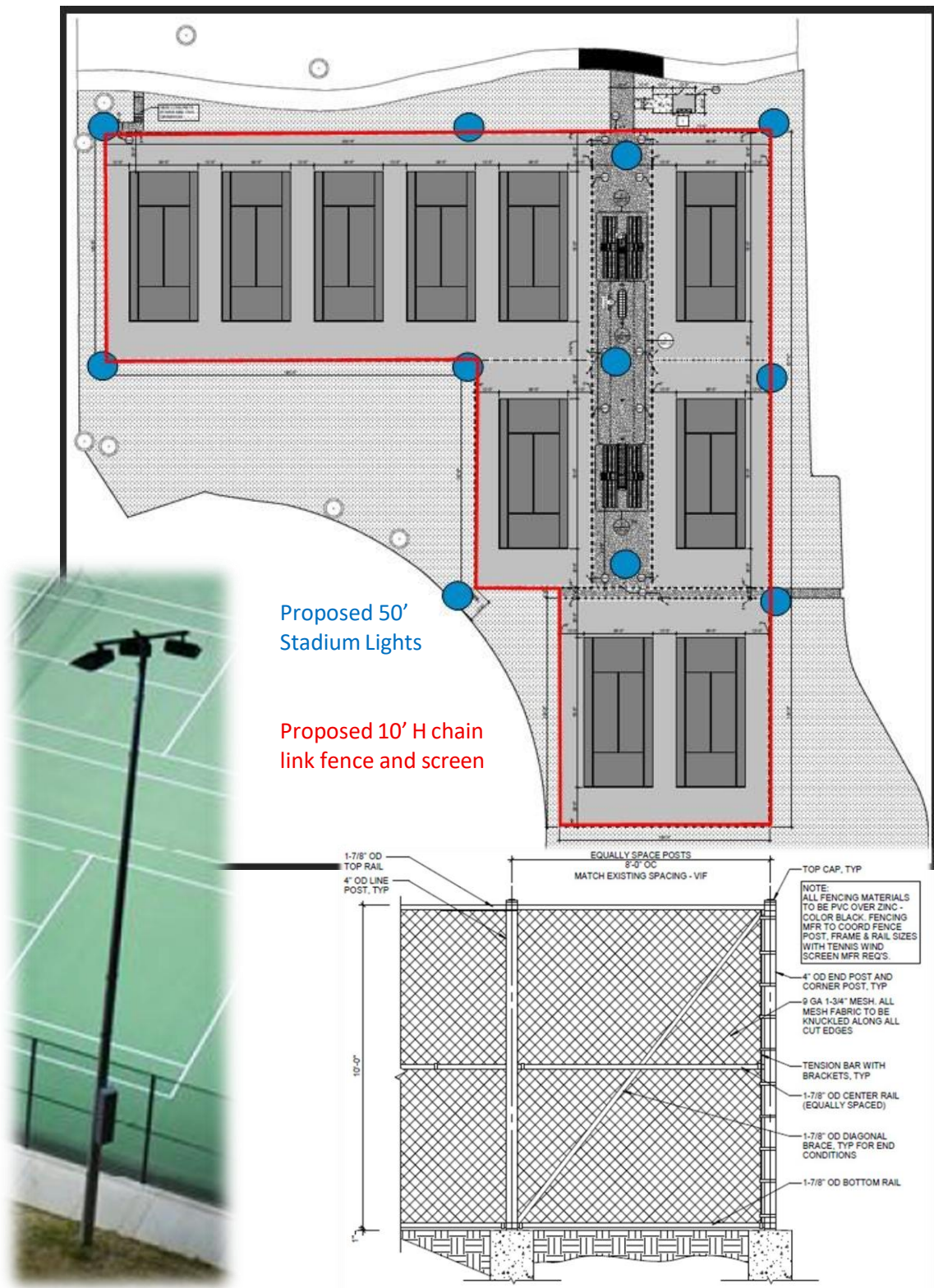
The Commission closed the public hearing and voted to table the matter for one month to allow the Board of Zoning Appeals to provide input and to give Engineering additional time to complete its review of the stormwater management plan.

Proposed location of 10 tennis courts at Community Park



Proposed elevated viewing platform

The Board of Zoning Appeals Variances are identified below. Show in red is the perimeter location of the proposed 10' high fence and screen and the location of proposed stadium lights are identified in blue.



Sports Field

Permitted In/Adjacent To:

CD-3 CD-4.A CD-4.B**Intent**

A Civic Space that consists of one or more programmed athletic fields and associated facilities. A Sports Field may be spatially defined by landscaping rather than Building Frontages. Its landscape shall consist of Paths and trails, trees, and lawns or fields, formally or informally disposed.

Specifications

Size	Not Regulated
Frontage	Buildings or Landscape
Character	Formal

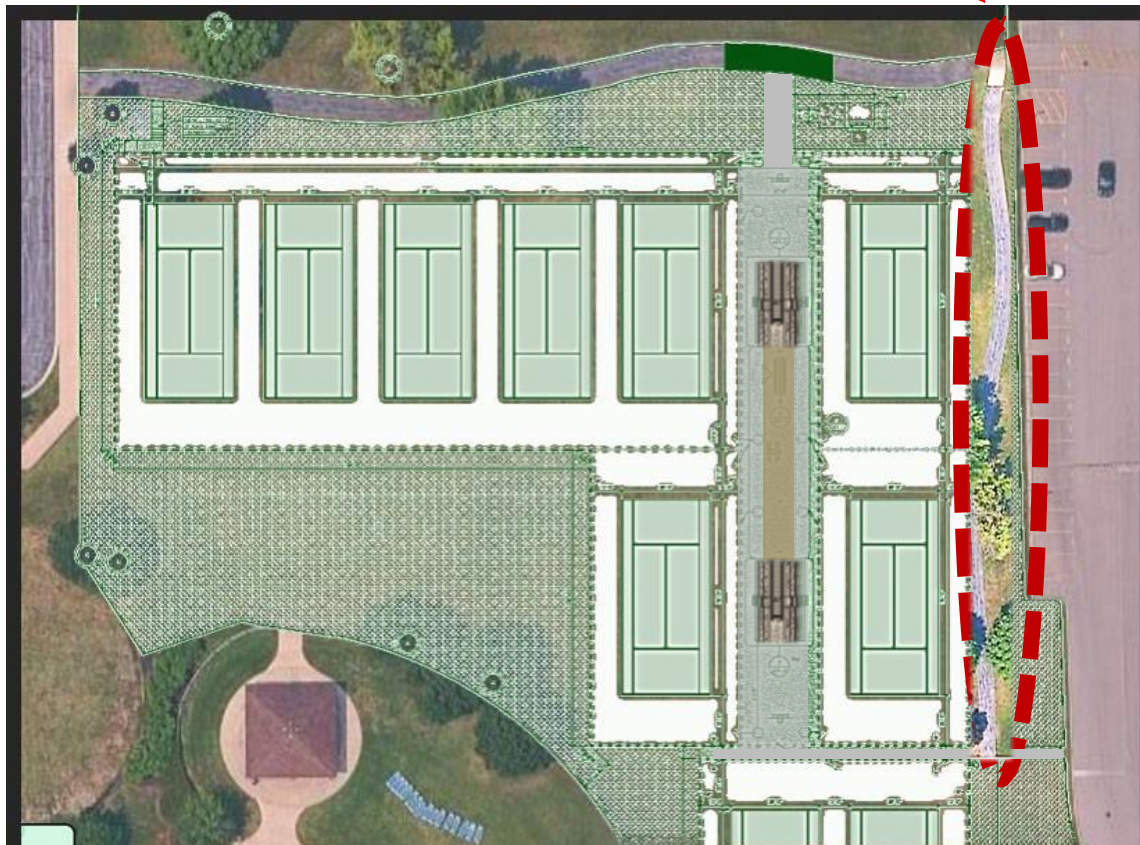
Typical Facilities

- Active recreation
- Recreational and community facilities
- Paths
- Accessory structures

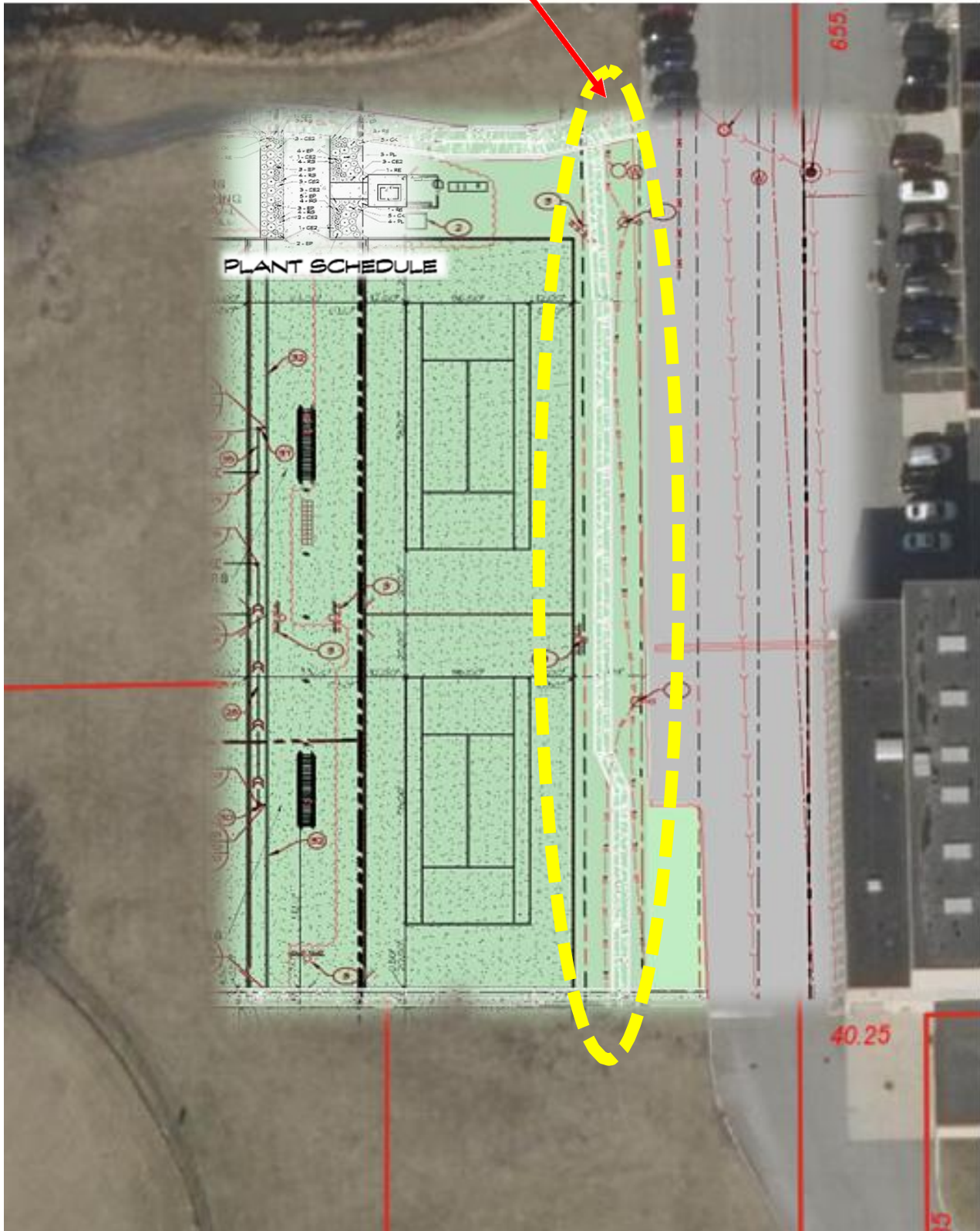
The Munster Character Based Zoning Code encourages sports field to be defined though landscaping consisting of paths, trees and lawns, where no building frontage is proposed.

It's recommended that the proposed tennis court sports field complex continue to define the site's frontage along the east side of the project site, adjacent to existing parking area with a trail/sidewalk connecting the existing north trail entrance to the proposed south walkway entrance. It is also recommended that this frontage be defined with additional landscape materials to be maintained as defined in Section 5.01 of the the Park and School Town of Munster lease agreement.

See subject frontage area to be improved with trail/sidewalk and landscape material.

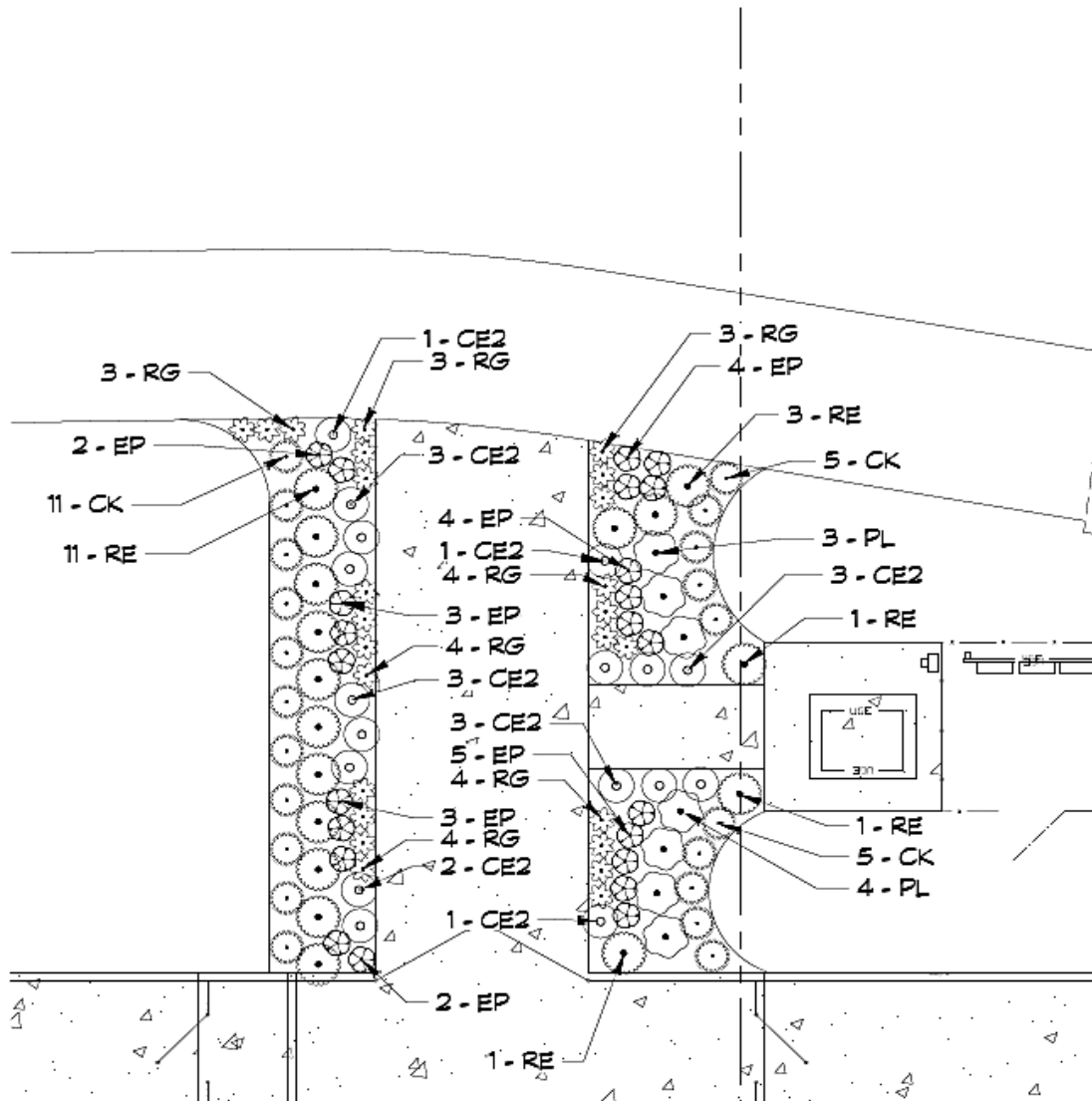


See subject frontage area to be improved with trail/sidewalk and landscape material.



PLANT SCHEDULE

<u>SYMBOL</u>	<u>CODE</u>	<u>BOTANICAL / COMMON NAME</u>	<u>SPACING</u>	<u>QTY</u>
GRASSES				
	CK	<i>Calamagrostis x acutiflora</i> 'Karl Foerster' / Karl Foerster Feather Reed Grass	24" o.c.	21
	CE2	<i>Genchrus alopecuroides</i> 'Hameiri' / Hameiri Fountain Grass	24" o.c.	17
PERENNIALS				
	EP	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i> 'Pica Bella' / Pica Bella Coneflower	18" o.c.	23
	PL	<i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i> 'Denim 'n Lace' / Denim 'n Lace Russian Sage	30" o.c.	7
	RE	<i>Rosa x 'ChewPatout'</i> / Oso Easy® Urban Legend® Rose	30" o.c.	17
	RG	<i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i> 'Goldsturm' / Goldsturm Coneflower	18" o.c.	25



APPLICABLE CODE:

In reviewing, recommending, and taking action on a Development Plan/Site Plan, the recommending and the Decision-Making Authority shall take into consideration all relevant and material factors and shall ensure that the Site Plan and Site Plan application comply with all of the following, and shall establish any appropriate conditions and safeguards in harmony with the general purpose and intent of this Article:

- a. Compliance with Comprehensive Plan, this Article, Subdivision Regulations, & Building Code. The proposed Development and the Site Plan and Site Plan application must comply with the Town Comprehensive Plan, this Article, the Town Subdivision Regulations, the Town Building Code.
- b. Public services.
 - i. The proposed Development shall not pose an undue burden on police or fire services.
 - ii. If the Development results in a significant increase for park, school, or other public services, property dedicated for these purposes shall be required as a condition of Development.
 - iii. Appropriate right-of-way and Easement dedications shall occur in order to provide necessary access for proper utility maintenance.
 - iv. Streets internal to a Development may be dedicated or private, depending on their design and function.
- c. Supplemental Development Standards.

Without limitation to Sections 26-6.804. G.8.a-b, the proposed Development, Site Plan, and Site Plan application must comply with the following:

- i. The Supplemental Development Standards of Section 26-6.602 (Site Grading). The Supplemental Development Standards of Section 26-6.603 (Site Drainage).
- ii. The Supplemental Development Standards of Section 26-6.604 (Sewage).
- iii. The Supplemental Development Standards of Section 26-6.605 (Utilities).
The Supplemental Development Standards of Section 26-6.606 (Traffic Circulation).
The Supplemental Development Standards of Section 26-6.607 (Facilities for Persons with Disabilities).
- iv. The Supplemental Development Standards of Section 26-6.608 (Preservation of Natural Features).
- v. The Supplemental Development Standards of Section 26-6.609 (Areas of Special Flood Hazard).

SECTION 26-6.804. G. 5. Applicability; Types of Site Plans. (MZC pg. 382)

- a. In all Zoning Districts other than Districts CD-3, CD-3.R1, CD-3.R2, and CD-3.R3, Site Plan approval from either the Plan Commission or the Zoning Administrator, as applicable under paragraph i or ii below, must be obtained:
 - i. from the Plan Commission prior to any of the following and for any plan or proposal pursuant to which any of the following is to be erected, Developed, re-Developed, Improved, Substantially Modified, or occur:
 - I. a Structure other than a Single-Family Detached Dwelling or Two-Family Detached Dwelling;
 - II. a Parking Area or Parking Lot;
 - V. any Use of vacant land;

- VIII.** a change in Use that will affect the characteristics or impact to the site or the Town with respect to traffic, access, drainage, utilities, or Town services, as determined by the Planning Director;
- IX.** Facade improvements for which a Building Permit is required and which affect greater than fifty percent (50%) of any street-facing Facade, excluding Ordinary Maintenance and Repair;
- ii.** from the Zoning Administrator prior to any of the following and for any plan or proposal pursuant to which any of the following is to be erected, Developed, re-Developed, Improved, modified, or occur:
 - I.** any change of Use of any part of an existing Building other than a change of Use described in Section 26-6.804.G.5.a.i; or
 - II.** any Alteration or modification to a parcel of land, such as changes to parking layout, Driveways, landscaped areas, Screening, Wall, or fences, or public walkways other than those described in Sections 26-6.804.G.5.a.i.; or
 - III.** any modification to a Building or other Structure other than Ordinary Maintenance or Repair or a Substantial Modification.

STAFF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION:

Staff finds that the Commission conducted and closed the Public Hearing for this matter on October 14, 2025. The applicant has submitted a complete application with all required supporting documents and has recently updated the civil plans to include a landscape sheet (L-1). However, the proposed landscaping is limited to the north entrance along the existing east–west trail. While the planting schedule for this area may help define the primary entrance, it does not adequately establish the frontage of the tennis court complex as referenced in the applicable code.

Staff recommends additional discussion regarding the east frontage of the proposed sports facility. Staff supports defining the sports field frontage along the east side of the project site, adjacent to the existing parking area, with a trail or sidewalk connecting the existing north trail entrance to the proposed south walkway entrance. Landscape materials should be maintained in accordance with Section 5.01 of the Park and School Town of Munster lease agreement.

Finally, staff has not yet received the stormwater and drainage review report from the Town Engineer regarding the proposed underground storage and detention areas. However, staff recommends approval with the condition that the applicant comply with all engineering stormwater recommendations. Staff further recommends that, in accordance with Town Code, a sidewalk or trail connection—along with an accompanying planting schedule—be installed along the east side of the tennis courts, in proximity to the parking lot area. This connection should link the northern trail entrance to the proposed southern sidewalk entrance to establish a defined sports field frontage where no building frontage is provided

MOTION:

Plan Commission may consider the following motion:

Motion to Approve PC 25-020, a Development Plan for the School Town of Munster Tennis Courts Facility, with the condition that stormwater plan complies with engineering recommendations and an east frontage be spatially defined with a path/trail and landscape/plant schedule, including all discussion and findings.