



Chapter 6

Visioning



Visioning

Branding: Munster Matters

The Town of Munster Parks & Recreation Department branded the master plan and its process as “Munster Matters – Master Plan Campaign” with the slogan “Your Voice Matters – Be Part of the Process”. A logo was developed and used on all promotional and marketing materials, including social media, the survey, Mind Mixer, and printed materials. This branding created a strong identity for the master plan process.

A critical component of the Munster Matters – Master Plan Campaign is effective public engagement. Overall, the community visioning process must be balanced, open, and collaborative and as a result will build public trust in the process and the plan. Close interaction with the Department staff, residents, and key stakeholders was accomplished throughout the public process and resulted in the identification of residents’ concerns, expressed needs and priorities regarding the Town of Munster Parks & Recreation parks, facilities, programs, and services. The project team worked to include a comprehensive representation of interest and user groups.

These efforts included formal public input obtained in a series of focus and stakeholder group meetings and a public open house/workshop held throughout the day and evening at both Town Hall and Centennial Park Clubhouse on January 11, 2018. At these meetings the participants were asked a series of questions by the consultant team. All the groups were asked the same four basic questions, and then if appropriate, additional questions tailored to their interests. These four basic questions were:

1. What are the most important issues facing the Town of Munster Parks and Recreation Department?
2. What is working well for the Parks Department?
3. What is not working well for the Parks Department?
4. What do you hope a master planning project for the Town of Munster Parks and Recreation Department should address overall?

Each group met for about an hour while the facilitators recorded their comments on “flip charts”. The meeting summaries are reviewed in the previous chapter and all the data is included in the appendix of this report.

All of the information was collected and analyzed along with the park inventories and programming analysis to guide the vision for the comprehensive – Master Plan for the following elements:

- Programs
- Parks & Facilities
- Opportunities
- Trends



Accessibility and Universal Design

Munster Parks and Recreation does not discriminate against any person, regardless of the person's abilities or disabilities. In order to abide by the standards outlined in Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA), this Master Plan outlines accessibility and universal design in five core components:

1. Self-Evaluation/Submittal
2. Transition Plan
3. Public Notice
4. Grievance Procedure
5. Designated ADA Coordinator

Self-Evaluation

As a component for the master planning of Munster's Parks and Recreation Department, various focus groups were contacted for their input on the overall services of the Department. More details on their input can be found in Chapter 5: Public Participation. These groups include:

1. Munster Soccer Club
2. Munster Babe Ruth
3. Munster Lacrosse
4. Munster Little League
5. Munster Girls Softball
6. St. Thomas More School
7. School Town of Munster
8. Munster Chamber of Commerce
9. Munster Kiwanis Club
10. South Shore Arts
11. Munster Garden Club
12. Munster Jr. Women's Club
13. Rotary Club of Munster
14. Munster Lion's Club
15. Billy Casper Golf

There were several groups who commented that accessibility could be improved around the parks, particularly around the athletic facilities.

Examined Areas, Identified Problems, and Modifications to be Made

Every outdoor open space owned by the Parks and Recreation Department was examined by the consulting team. Accessibility issues that were identified by the team are mentioned within the park descriptions. For those detailed descriptions, see Chapter 11: Park Inventory and Assessments.

The following page is a chart that indicates issues present currently within Munster's facilities. Alongside the identified issues noted at each park is a column that indicates how modifications can be made to improve each park's condition and ADA compliance.

Transition Plan

To accomplish the modifications noted on the following page, a transition plan is necessary. Each action is also included in the Chapter 13: Recommendations section of this Master Plan, and due to the urgency in complying with ADA, every action is noted as a top priority. That means, within a year of this plan's adoption by the Park Board, each action should be taken.

Some of the tasks have quick turnover from installation to completion, and may not require much time. Other tasks may be more involved and complex, and may require significant time commitment, planning, and cost.

Potential costs to reach completion of all tasks have been referenced in the Chapter 13: Recommendations section. The low end of the potential costs is roughly \$100,000, while the high end is just under \$200,000. These estimates were based on an aggregate of all tasks mentioning accessibility in Chapter 13. A possible funding source for these projects may come from Munster Parks and Recreation's capital budget and other grants they may receive upon Park Board adoption of the Master Plan.

Figure 25: ADA Self-Evaluation Chart

Park	Accessibility Issues/Problems Identified	Modifications Identified for Compliance
Beech Park	Raised curb limits or prevents accessible entrance points to play apparatus	Provide ADA accessible routes to all activity areas within the park, including playgrounds, play apparatus spectator seating
Bluebird Park	There is no accessible route along the parking lot and no accessible connection from the parking lot to the perimeter path system	Install an accessible connection between the parking lot and the park's perimeter path system
Briar Creek Park	Not an ADA-compliant drinking fountain	Replace outdated drinking fountain with ADA compliant fountain
Burlwood Park	Not an ADA-compliant drinking fountain	Replace outdated drinking fountain with ADA compliant fountain
Centennial Park	Existing paths within dog park are not ADA compliant	Install alternate hard surfacing to comply with ADA requirements
Circle Park	Path does not provide access to connect to the the play surface	Resurface limitations
Cobblestones Park	Concrete pad at tennis courts isolated from any path, limiting access to court	Install ADA compliant path to connect to existing pad at tennis court
F.H. Hammond Park	Access point into playground may not meet ADA access requirements. There are no accessible routes to ballfield. Drinking fountain is non-compliant with ADA.	Replace outdated drinking fountain with ADA compliant fountain. Complete path access into playground and ballfield with ADA compliant pathway
Grove Park	No ADA-compliant parking spaces. Drinking fountain not ADA-compliant.	Designate ADA parking spaces as well as replace outdated drinking fountain with ADA compliant path.
Heritage Park	Meditation walkway/wooded path not compliant with ADA due to boulders restricting access	Review condition of wooded path and adjust grade and layout if not ADA compliant.
Kiwanis Park	No accessibility into playground and drinking fountain is not ADA-compliant	Review site for accessible routes to playground. Replace fountain with ADA compliant fountain.
Orchard Park	Benches distributed throughout park at inaccessible locations	Relocate benches to pads that offer adequate space and are on accessible path.
Sunnyside Park	No accessibility into playground or drinking fountain. Drinking fountain is not ADA-compliant	Plan the park site to provide access to playground. Replace drinking fountain with ADA compliant model.
Twin Creek Park	Surfacing of asphalt path is uneven at areas, which can limit access throughout park.	Resurface to address access and eliminate barriers.
West Lakes Park	No ADA-compliant parking spaces. Drinking fountain not ADA-compliant.	Designate ADA parking spaces as well as replace outdated drinking fountain with ADA compliant model.
White Oak Park	Sunken concrete near the shelter is a mobility barrier.	Resurface to address mobility barriers

Public Notice

The Munster Parks and Recreation Department is under the jurisdiction of the Town of Munster. Therefore, the information relating to their ADA compliance is all found on the Town’s website, www.munster.org, which also hosts the information relating to the Parks and Recreation Department.

As every Park Board and Town Council meeting has its recorded minutes posted online, one can simply search “ADA” in the navigation bar at the top right of Munster’s website. There, various results will show all of the information Munster has that highlights their compliance to ADA. For example, a more recently Park Board-adopted project relates to improvements to the Centennial Park amphitheater for both ADA standards and safety.

Grievance Procedure

There is the possibility that other areas in Munster that are not identified will present hazards or limitations to universal accessibility. According to Title II of ADA, local governments with 50 or more employees (as Munster is classified) need to set in place a grievance procedure for those who feel that they have been discriminated against because of their disability, or others with disabilities.

Munster updated their most recent grievance procedure in 2016. Therefore, it should be referred to when a grievance takes place so that anyone who feels discriminated against can take appropriate steps to see their circumstances resolved. Munster will not place any cost to resolve the situation on the person going through the grievance procedure.

Designated ADA Coordinator

Every local government that has 50 or more employees is required to have a designated individual to coordinate ADA compliance within their jurisdiction. In the Town of Munster, this person is _____.