

From: [Wufoo](#)
To: [America In Bloom](#)
Subject: CN/AIB Grant Proposal Submission [#69]
Date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020 6:28:19 PM

Project Name *	Town of Munster, Indiana CN Railroad Beautification
Amount Requested (up to \$25,000). Enter without symbols. Example: 25000 *	24991
Name of organization/entity submitting proposal *	Town of Munster, Indiana
Your Name *	Thomas Vander Woude
Your title *	Planning Director
Address	<input type="checkbox"/> 1005 Ridge Road Munster, IN 46321 United States
Phone Number *	(219) 836-6995
Email *	tvanderwoude@munster.org
Please indicate the type of organization/entity submitting proposal *	Municipality
If this application is being submitted in collaboration with another group(s), please list and explain.	The Town of Munster has partnered with Centennial Village LLC, the developer of land immediately south of the project. The Town and the developer will each contribute \$12,495.50 in cash towards the match.
Estimated number of trees to be planted *	56
Estimated number of shrubs, groundcovers, and/or flowers to be planted *	60
Species of trees, shrubs, groundcovers, and flowers to be planted. *	Species are tbd. All low maintenance, non invasive native species will be used. Trees will be selected from the Town's approved tree list and will likely include oak, maple, serviceberry, redbud, or hawthorn. Shrubs will be native and likely include viburnum, yew, ninebark, hydrangea, etc. Groundcover and flowers will include ornamental native grasses and perennials such as black eye susan and purple coneflower.

Describe the proposed project in detail. Please explain how assistance from the CN EcoConnexions – From the Ground Up grant program will enhance your community's environmental, social health, and well being. (1,000 words max) *

The Town of Munster seeks a \$24,991 grant, matched by \$24,991 in Town and private funding, to install a landscaped buffer on Town-owned and private property south of the CN railroad tracks through Munster, Indiana, from Calumet Avenue on the west to the 45th Street underpass on the

east. The buffer will consist of four planting areas, each composed of trees, shrubs, and perennial plants. Both the materials and labor are included in the grant application.

The landscaped buffer is in a prominent and highly visible area, viewable from Calumet Avenue and 45th Street, which is traveled by approximately 45,000 vehicles per day; the Pennsy Greenway bike trail, a segment of a transcontinental trail; and the Centennial Village neighborhood.

The proposed project will provide a visual and noise barrier as well as a significant aesthetic and environmental enhancement for four major redevelopment projects underway in Munster. Immediately south of the landscaped area, the Town is constructing an extension of the Pennsy Greenway bicycle trail. The Pennsy Greenway is not only a local and regional route used by local walkers and cyclists but is a segment of two coast to coast national trails: the Great American Rail Trail and the American Discovery Trail. Beautification of this area will enhance the local environment as well as provide a gateway into the heart of the Town of Munster for travelers from around the country. Along with human travelers, this project will provide an area of habitat for wildlife populations such as birds and butterflies that travel along the trail corridor. West and south of the trail, the Town, State of Indiana, US DOT, and the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority are investing approximately \$27 million in cooperation with the CN Railway to improve the intersection of Calumet Avenue and 45th Street and to construct an underpass for 45th Street under the CN railroad. The proposed landscaping project will provide a finished edge on the north side of that project that will be visible to the over 45,000 vehicles that pass through that intersection every day. Both of these infrastructure projects are being constructed in conjunction with Centennial Village, a private redevelopment of a former industrial site into a mixed-use neighborhood including at least 233,400 square foot retail/commercial, 168 residential condominiums plus a 99-room SpringHill Suites hotel. It is expected that the residents of this neighborhood will benefit from both the visual and noise screening from the CN railroad as well as the enhanced bike trail. Just south of Centennial Village is Centennial Park, which is a regional greenspace with playgrounds, walking trails, a Clubhouse, and a golf course, all built on a capped landfill.

Describe how your community will be involved in the program, including planning, design, construction, and maintenance. How are your community volunteers and volunteer organizations expected to participate? (1,000 words max) *

The Town of Munster is partnering with Centennial Village LLC, the developer of Centennial Village, in the submittal of this grant. The Town is preparing and submitting the grant materials and is providing half the matching funds as a cash contribution for the grant request. The Town will design and install signage describing the project and acknowledging the grantees, including their logos at the east and west ends of the buffer. After installation, the Town will assume maintenance responsibilities for the landscaping as a component of its normal bike trail maintenance program. Centennial Village LLC is donating the design of the landscaping and an easement to permit the relocation of the bike trail onto their property to provide a wider buffer area. The developer is providing \$12,500 in local matching dollars.

Describe how the project addresses environmental challenges and how it will be sustained. Please include how the project will receive ongoing maintenance. (1,000 words max) *

This project addresses multiple environmental challenges.

1. The natural environment. It is well documented that natural areas and wildlife habitats are becoming increasingly broken apart into smaller and smaller pieces. Wildlife, such as birds, insects, and other plant pollinators needs large, contiguous areas within which to travel, feed, and rest. This project will create an island of nature within the longer, coast-to-coast greenway bike trail corridor. This is especially important in an urbanized area where greenspace is at a premium.
2. The human environment. The Centennial Village development will include at least 168

condominium units within about 1/5 of a mile to the CN railroad. Urban noise is known to be harmful to human health and well-being. The project, through the installation of dense plantings will shield and disperse the noise of the frequent freight trains that travel the corridor and absorb some of the noise generated by traffic along Calumet and Avenue and 45th street. Along with reducing noise, trees have been shown to provide health benefits to humans by simply being within their sight. According to the Morton Arboretum: Trees make us healthier. There is a documented link between trees, green spaces, and mortality rates. Residents of tree-lined communities have reported feeling healthier and been shown to have fewer cardio-metabolic conditions than their counterparts; they are more likely to be physically active and less likely to be overweight or obese. Trees have been strongly linked to reduced symptoms of depression and increased life satisfaction. The presence of trees has also been proven to improve the condition of people with neurodegenerative disease. (<https://www.mortonarb.org/trees-plants/benefits-trees/improving-our-health>)

3. The built environment. In 2008, the Town of Munster experienced a devastating flood when the Little Calumet River, located along the north limit of the Town overtopped its banks and spilled into residential neighborhoods and commercial corridors. Since that time the Town has utilized town funds, development regulations, and grant programs to plant trees and increase greenspace within public and private properties, all with a goal of reducing stormwater runoff into the Little Calumet River and helping to prevent future flooding. Each greenspace, such as the project being proposed here, provides another piece of green infrastructure that absorbs rather than sheds stormwater. The Town will maintain the landscape through its public works or parks department maintenance staff. The staff people in these departments are already maintaining the landscaping along the existing Pennsy Greenway bike trail, so this will be merely an extension of their duties. For questions of tree maintenance, the Town retains a consulting forester to provide oversight and advice to Town staff.

Describe how America in Bloom and the program sponsor, CN EcoConnexions – From the Ground Up, will be recognized for their contribution. Please include information on logo usage, launch events, press conferences, etc. As an inauguration event is required, please indicate how your community would envision the event. (1,000 words max) *

The Town of Munster operates a sign fabrication shop within its Public Works Department which is able to fabricate custom metal signs. Public Works staff will fabricate and install at least two signs for the project, one on the west project limit and one on the east. At a minimum, each sign will include an acknowledgement of the project sponsors American In Bloom and CN EcoConnexions – From the Ground Up for their monetary and programmatic support. The signs will include the logos for each organization. A press release will be generated by the Town and provided to the local newspapers: the Northwest Indiana Times and the Post Tribune. An article will be drafted and included in the Town's monthly newsletter, the News You Can Use, which is received by all residents and businesses; and posted on the Town's website and social media pages. The Town envisions an inauguration event consisting of a gathering of the Town Council, Town staff, representatives of Centennial Village LLC and local press. Given the location of the project along the coast to coast trail, we anticipate inviting representatives from regional bicycling organizations, such as the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission also. The event will include remarks from the Town Council and AIB/CN representatives followed by either a ribbon cutting or ceremonial planting photo opportunity. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the Town will provide a tour of the 45th/CN underpass project, Centennial Village, Pennsy Greenway, and Centennial Park.

Describe how you will measure the project's success. How will the project be evaluated for success? How will you share the results of your project? Note, in order to receive payment, you will be required to submit a final report to America in Bloom. *

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required to submit a final report to America in Bloom.

The project will be considered a success if the following is true:

1. It is completed on time and within budget.
2. The inauguration event is attended by local and regional stakeholders.
3. The Town and AIB/CN receive positive news articles in the local newspapers.
4. The bike path continues to be used and enjoyed by walkers and cyclists.
5. The Centennial Village development progresses and is completed.
6. The Town of Munster continues to enjoy a strong working relationship with the CN Railway.
7. The Town of Munster is able to maintain the landscaping in perpetuity.
8. The AIB accepts the final report.

Attach budget document (10 MB limit) *



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