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## **CALUMET-RIDGE STREETSCAPE PLAN**

### **PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE MEETING SUMMARY**

**December 10, 2020 | video webinar and visioning | 7:00 pm**

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The purpose of the Public Open House was to present streetscape concept plans and alternatives that were developed to date. Concepts and alternatives were based on outcomes of the public outreach activities and the work of the steering committee.

Due to the current health crisis, the meeting was conducted via Zoom videoconference. Meeting invitations and announcements were communicated via the following methods:

- Project website ([munster-streetscape.org](https://munster-streetscape.org)).
- Project website posts sent to the project website's 250+ followers via email.
- Munster website announcements
- Facebook announcements
- Committee email announcements

The emailed communications invited community members to review project documents at the project website in advance of the meeting. <https://munster-streetscape.org/documents/>

**Munster Streetscape – Public Open House Meeting Recording | Start Time: Dec 10, 2020 7:00 PM**

<https://youtu.be/yFV-NGuYFfk>



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Approximately 27 people attended the public meeting. The following staff and consultant team members attended and presented.

TOWN OF MUNSTER STAFF		CONSULTANT TEAM	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tom Vander Woude, Community Development, Town of Munster</li><li>• Dustin Anderson, Town Manager, Town of Munster</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Jodi Mariano, Teska Associates</li><li>• Heather Faivre, Teska Associates</li><li>• Sara Disney-Haufe, Sam Schwartz Consulting</li></ul>	
PUBLIC MEETING PARTICIPANTS			
A list of attendees identified by screen names follows:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Andrew Fentress</li><li>• Lea Kilibarda</li><li>• Franco</li><li>• Ken</li><li>• Michael G</li><li>• Steven Millies</li><li>• Aaron Kowalski</li><li>• Jesse Cassiano</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chuck Gardiner</li><li>• Lee Millies</li><li>• Maureen Jones</li><li>• Raquel</li><li>• Jose Gutierrez</li><li>• Zak Boswell</li><li>• CJ</li><li>• Auntie Lea</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rebecca Manellis</li><li>• Kerry Meyer</li><li>• Anthony Andello</li><li>• Julie O’Connor</li><li>• Ireen Pasia</li><li>• Galaxy A51</li><li>• Jill Dito</li></ul>	

The meeting agenda and presentation topics follow below:

- 1. Introductions, Project Goals, Study Area, Scope and Schedule.**
- 2. Community Outreach:** *Highlights of the various outreach activities and key comments.*
- 3. Concept Plan Presentation: Streetscape Elements:** *sign families, furnishings families, plantings, roadway lights and signals, public art.*
- 4. Concept Plan Organization and Metrics:** *Minimum vs. maximum approaches to streetscape development and applications to Calumet Avenue / Ridge Road, pilot projects options. Reported metrics include: distance between pedestrian crossings, pedestrian crossing distance, sidewalk width, impervious / pervious spaces, parkway widths, tree plantings.*
- 5. Approach to Future Traffic Analysis and Traffic Considerations and Metrics:** *Intersection levels of service, traffic metrics that identify vehicle delay and queues, bicyclist level of traffic stress, curb cuts and on street parking counts.*
- 6. Mentimeter Poll Activity and Q+A**



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Following the presentation, participants participated in a web-based polling visioning activity.

Outcomes from the polling program and discussion points are provided on the following pages:



**Welcome! Who is joining us tonight? Please add your name:**

Franco	Steven Millies	Chuck
Jesse Casiano	Michael G	Anthony
Jill	Kerry Meyer	jonathan funston

Tom	Kathy Szala	Mike Bacino
Zak Boswell	JOC	Ireen
Raquel	Dustin	



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**Calumet Ave: In a few words, describe your biggest concern.** Mentimeter

traffic speed, frequency, noise, safety	It's poor first impression of Munster	Pedestrian Crossing, Traffic delays at lights.
Ugly, not pedestrian friendly, crime	It's ugly	Speed of vehicles, driving in and out of businesses.
Traffic delays.	Congestion, traffic always stopping	Too little greenery

The flow of traffic and speed.	Impervious surfaces as far as the eye can see	No Munster sign, cars blocking traffic
traffic speed	signage, bicycling and walking	No pedestrian-friendly destinations
Bike lane north south	Impossible to cross as pedestrian	No Munster sign. Too busy.

No. I'm concerned about drivers running into the median and destroying the nice structure
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Key Calumet Avenue concerns include:

1. Speeding traffic, congestion, and stop-and-go movements
2. Inhospitable pedestrian environment
3. Needs a welcoming entrance to the community
4. Lacks greening and pervious spaces

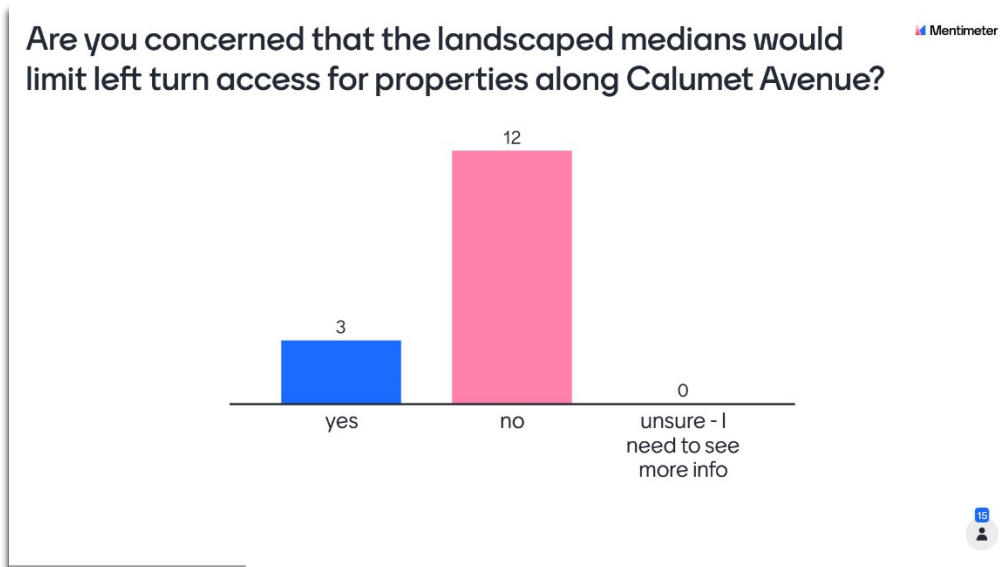


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## Calumet Avenue - access control considerations

During the outreach, we heard desires for traffic calming and additional landscaping. The Calumet Avenue 'Max' Concept incorporates landscaped medians in order to provide these amenities. The traffic impacts include limited left turn access for properties along Calumet Avenue. (U-turns would be permitted at intersections.)



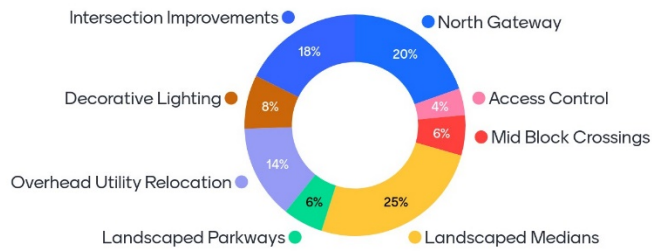
When asked whether participants were concerned about limited left turn access for properties along Calumet Avenue as part of the streetscape Max concept, most participants responded that they were not concerned.



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## Calumet Avenue Improvements: select your top 3 features.

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Participants' top features associated with Calumet Avenue include:

- 25% Landscaped Medians
- 20% North Gateway
- 18% Intersection Improvements
- 14% Overhead Utility Relocation



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Paint us a picture of Calumet Ave: describe a scene you'd like to see in the future. Mentimeter

slower traffic, where people feel safe	More greenery with public spaces and pedestrians	Green space, gateway, sense of "Munster"
Better flow	Families walking, small shops, biking paths, public spaces	Much better welcoming look to the town of Munster.
flowing traffic, more green space	No utility lines, full tree canopy and numerous mid-block crossings with people walking up and down the street along shops that are up to the front of lot with parking in back	Small businesses thriving. Outdoor dining. TREES, beautiful plantings, pots with large plants, Munster pride. Less crime. Bikes, nature

ability to connect with ease to trails, businesses, art center, town hall by walking or bike	Less travel time around town	Occasional street festival, bike riders, walkers, mural, cars trying to turn NOT blocking traffic opposite traffic, many people walking
A nice welcome sign and matching decor versus bandaid fixes. Matching light poles through entire town versus certain sections.	slower traffic, safe crosswalks, little calumet river cleanup and pedestrian areas	Environment that encourages spending more time instead of rushing to get through it
I love Strong Towns	Two couples go to dinner at different restaurants and take the long walk back to the car down the public and well lit greenways. They bump into neighbors they haven't seen in awhile and stop to catch deciding to walk to a nearby bench to catchup	slow traffic, one lane each direction, controls to make sure traffic does not spill into neighborhoods

Murals, bikers, walkers, boutiques, coffee shops, small restaurants, landscaping	slower traffic will route to secondary streets	It's so difficult for those businesses to thrive- it's not the destination it should be- it is an eyesore. There are fabulous businesses that need our support
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When asked to envision a future scene along Calumet Avenue, key topics included pedestrian access and safety. Key quotes include:

- *"Much better welcoming look to the town of Munster."*
- *"Green space, gateway, sense of 'Munster'"*
- *"Ability to connect with ease to trails, businesses, art center, Town Hall by walking or bike."*
- *"Two couples go to dinner at different restaurants and take the long walk back to the car down the public and well lit greenways. They bump into neighbors they haven't seen in a while and stop to catch up deciding to walk to a nearby bench to catch up."*



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**Ridge Road: In a few words, describe your biggest concern.** Mentimeter

Ridge Road has so much potential and is so underloved	Pedestrian/bike access	People running red lights, pedestrian crossings, narrow sidewalks.
A real sense of place that draws people towards it and keeps them there	chain restaurants, gas stations, tobacco shops, doesn't have a family friendly, downtown	Lack of character and uniformity
Lacking a downtown feel that it could have.	lack of bike path	excess traffic flowing through to secondary streets

Similar to calumet example of two couples but more about storefronts where you could store hop for holidays from local stores.	The traffic speed is fast from east to west. Need to be consistent with matching light poles etc.	You never see people walking there, I would love it to be walk-inviting
agree with traffic flowing into secondary streets!	Nothing fun to do!	Needs a charm upgrade
Fabulous businesses that are not supported by the structure. An eyesore- not the destination it should be.	Walkability along ridge, more restaurants, dining. Bring a coffee shop! Street fests are a great idea	if you change cal/ridge, need to change broadmoore

We need to connect wicker to community to centennial with walking and bike paths. You could use ridge and calumet for that and lower congestion. Less throughout	Worried about traffic congestion when train station is built	More greenspace !
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Key Ridge Road concerns include:

1. Local businesses are not supported by the environment
2. Does not invite people to walk here
3. Lacks a sense of place
4. Needs greening and landscaping





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## Ridge Road - road diet considerations

During the outreach, we heard desires for traffic calming, wider sidewalks, a bike trail, on-street parking + landscaping. The Ridge Road Max Concept reduces travel lanes in order to reallocate space for these amenities within the right of way. The traffic metrics tell us that the road diet concept may result in approximately 1-3 minutes travel delay from Hohman Ave to Calumet Ave.

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## Are you concerned that the road diet amenities could cause approximately 1-3 minutes travel delay between Hohman Ave and Calumet Ave?

Response	Count
yes	1
no	14
unsure - I need to see more info	1

16

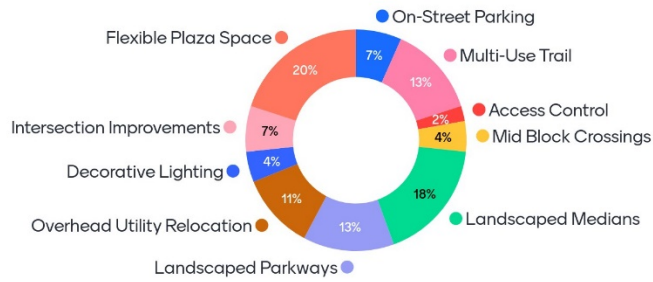
When asked whether participants were concerned that the Ridge Road road diet would cause approximately 1-3 minutes travel delay between Hohman Ave and Calumet Ave, most participants responded that they were not concerned.



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## Ridge Road Improvements: select your top 3 features.

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Participants' top features associated with Ridge Road include:

- 20% Flexible Plaza Space
- 18% Landscaped Medians
- 13% Multi-Use Trail
- 13% Landscaped Parkways



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**Paint us a picture of Ridge Rd: describe a scene you'd like to see in the future.** Mentimeter

I place I would like to go to and not just pass through	Evening out, have dinner, walk to a few shops.	Marriage proposals
Outdoor dining, festivals, bike riders, nice lighting	Ridge Road could look like downtown Valpo, downtown Crown Point or downtown Homewood. Greenspace, nice businesses and restaurants, family friendly	Safe crossing to a variety of local businesses
Parents with kids in strollers browsing through local shops. Stop and sit.	I would love to see public art, benches, a mural	Outdoor dining, much more of a downtown feel

Vibrant and verdant active corridor	Exactly Lansing	A lot of walking and biking activity on trail, festivals, access control, landscaping improvements
Yes, Lansing	controlled traffic, nicer businesses, more greenspace	can I connect to broader regional trails safely
Small business support, bikes, people walking, beautiful pots, trees, outdoor dining, public art	First Friday concerts at Meadow and Ridge	Street festivals, farmer's market, cafes, ice cream shops, wine bars, art, outdoor dining!

More outdoor dining areas, larger area around the fountain, plaza for art shows or live music, more lighting for walks, train station that fits the neighborhood	Matching lights from west to East. It's great to have green space but you will need to hire more staff to maintain. Ridge Road has been compromised for years. More people are walking Ridge	Photogenic space
streetfests on weekends. A new park with splashpad and gathering for events	Actually see other Munster residents besides micro-community parks	Continue what Lansing has. It works there. Not sure why it is suddenly so busy once in Munster
public art; ADA	Both are nice but maintenance an issue over years	Neither

Rustic with low maintenance
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When asked to envision a future scene along Ridge Road, key topics included a vibrant, pedestrian and bicyclist friendly business district. Key quotes include:

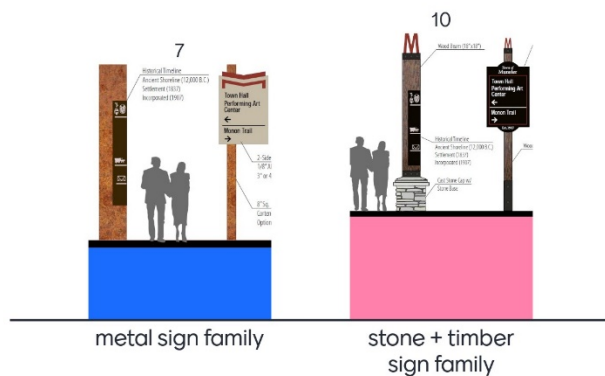
- *"Vibrant and verdant active corridor."*
- *"Evening out, have dinner, walk to a few shops."*
- *"A lot of walking and biking activity on trail, festivals, access control, landscaping improvements."*
- *"More outdoor dining areas, larger area around the fountain, plaza for art shows or live music, more lighting for walks, train station that fits the neighborhood."*



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## Which signage concept do you prefer?

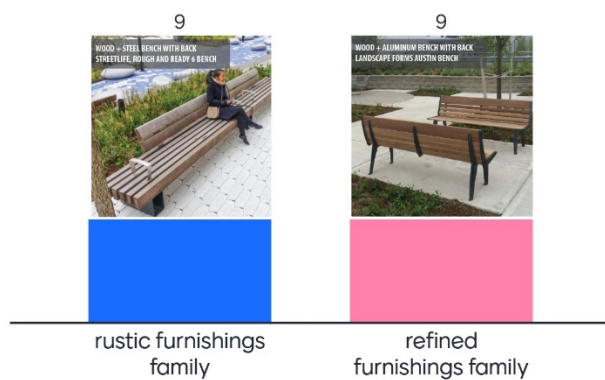
Mentimeter



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## Which furnishings family do you prefer?

Mentimeter



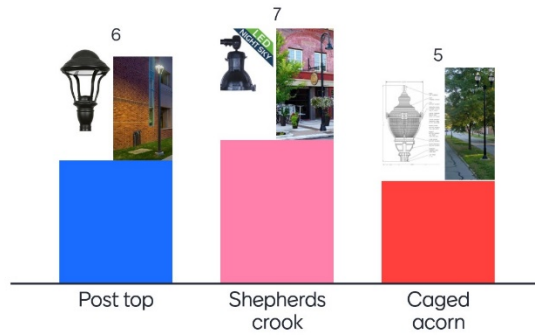
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Which pedestrian scale light do you prefer for Ridge Road?

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Which pilot project should Munster focus on implementing first?

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What have we missed? Please add your suggestions + comments here: Mentimeter

Facade improvements?	Can we landscape the off ramp/on-ramp?	Thank you! We love your services!
Thank you!	The only comment is... we would really REALLY like to see these max improvements to happen!	Preliminary cost of project
Thank you	Max, Baby, max!	The poor attendance might be due to lack of knowledge that this meeting was taking place

are we taking a perspective of impacts/planning for the next 10,20,30 years? what shifts (driving preferences, delivery truck use, aging populations, public wifi)?	Connect all parks with bike paths and walk lanes. Neighborhoods are isolated. It's a drivable town only.	What can be done to prevent the crime that has been taking place
Max for sure	what night time safety infrastructure is being considered? e.g. purple light stations on university campuses	No place to have consistent outdoor, community, festival, celebratory events
This was a very well-done presentation	The planters in front of Giovanni's are an example of how not to landscape	Look at the original drawings of Munster. The green space was 10x the currently

The original plan is on the wall at the front entrance of town hall between the two sets of doors. Really look at it and you can feel how great that community would be
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The comments and questions were further addressed in the Q+A, described on the following pages.

Mentimeter

**Thank you! Please enter your comments + questions in the Zoom meeting chat.**



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**MEETING Q + A.** Meeting participants added their questions and comments to at the end of the Mentimeter activity and in the Zoom Chat. Tom Vander Woude read questions aloud. A list of questions and responses follow below:

**Q1: The corridor today seems to have patterns of crime that target local businesses and use Calumet Avenue / I80/94 access as a ‘fast getaway’. Can something be done about easy-in and easy-out in terms of crime?**

*A1: Addressing crime specifically is not part of the streetscape scope. However, the streetscape plan proposes improvements that may have an indirect impact on the easy-in/easy-out nature of the corridor. Streetscape features, traffic calming and an increased presence of pedestrians and bicyclists tend to result in a feeling of safer places.*

**Q2: We are concerned about maintenance and upkeep of the streetscape. How will this be addressed?**

*A2: The planning assignment began with conversations with the Town’s public works department, including existing maintenance challenges and successes. These conversations with public works are continuing as the planning proceeds. Streetscape and landscape materials should be specified to be extremely durable given the harsh environment of the roadways in all seasons. A commitment to maintaining the streetscape areas is needed to ensure success.*

**Q3: The presentation addresses the proposed levels of traffic service grades for the Min and Max scenarios. What are the current levels of service?**

*A3: Due to the current configurations and projected growth due to the anticipated station and surrounding development, the existing levels of traffic service will closely match the future max scenario.*

**Q4: What about larger scale roadway enhancements, such as a roundabout. Could this be considered?**

*A4: The current streetscape scope focuses on the available public rights of way. A roundabout would require taking private property to accommodate this type of improvement. The Town is currently taking steps to look more broadly at surrounding roadways in Munster. The Teska/Sam Schwartz team has been recently retained to study the expanded network of traffic as it connects and relates to the corridor areas. By conducting studies like these, the Town is taking proactive steps to plan for and influence the characteristics and behaviors of Munster’s roadway and public rights of way.*

**Q5: Are there mechanisms in place to encourage NIPSCO to move / bury overhead power lines?**

*A5: The consulting team and staff have discussed these topics with NIPSCO as part of the current assignment. We understand the complex nature of relocating and/or burying the various types of overhead wires along the corridors. Although it is complicated, it will ultimately come at a cost to the Town. There are some ‘low hanging fruit’ utility relocations that are less complicated to address, such as relocating the telephone lines and some aerial lines along Ridge Road.*



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**Q6: Is there a way to incentivize the types of businesses that come to Munster?**

*A6: Although economic development is not the scope of this assignment, we have seen successful examples from other community streetscape projects that demonstrate how public investment tends to influence private investment and enhancement. Improving public spaces are often catalysts for business improvements.*

**Q7: How does the streetscape address safety at nighttime? For instance, should we consider enhanced lighting / emergency call boxes like what is seen at college campuses?**

*A7: The streetscape concepts prioritize open access and clear views throughout. As such landscape plantings are either less than 3' ht or above 7' ht, maintaining an open viewshed between the top of shrubs/groundcover and the base of canopy trees. Similarly, light levels need to maintain standards for lighting at public pavement areas. openness and visibility.*

**Q8: Is it possible that Ridge Road traffic calming would decrease traffic to the businesses?**

*A8: Traffic calming along Ridge Road intends to reduce traffic speed to create a multi-modal environment. More pedestrians and bicyclists will have more exposure to businesses. Also, congestion is often an indicator of a strong business district.*

**Q9: Will the planted medians inhibit snow plowing?**

*A9: The planted median design and species selections should be developed to coexist with snow plowing operations. The species selections provided in the concept plan are tolerant of deicing salts.*

**Q10: The concept plans address left turning movements for businesses along Calumet Avenue. What about left turning lanes (and stacking) onto the cross streets?**

*A10: The intent of the concept plans is to provide continued access to cross streets throughout the corridor. The concept plans identify conceptual traffic queuing currently. Final engineering will address the exact lengths of tapers / required stacking spaces.*

**Q11: Does the traffic modeling anticipate future commercial and residential developments in the south part of Munster?**

*A11: The team worked closely with NIRPC and incorporated available traffic modeling which considers known plans and developments. If the streetscape plan is adopted, then this too will be incorporated into NIRPC's modeling for future and developments.*

**Q12: What about artificial plant materials? Would these be appropriate for the streetscape?**

*A12: Artificial turf is very engineering intensive, requiring substantial drainage infrastructure and base course layers to be installed properly. It is worth noting that the expectations of the grant and the Town include a sustainable approach to streetscape and landscape design. As such, our design direction includes the specifications of native and durable plant materials to meet those environmental benefits.*





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**Q13: Have any Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) been conducted for this project?**

*Q13: The scope of the Streetscape Master Plan is a conceptual level study which is intended to provide guidance to the Town of Munster for project implementation. As such no EIS has been completed, nor is required, as part of this planning effort.*

Next steps include the following:

- Final Streetscape Plan Development. Based on inputs gathered tonight and during past activities, a final streetscape plan will be documented. This plan will be presented at a public meeting, preliminarily anticipated to take place in Spring 2021.
- Community poll #2 is out and participants are encouraged to take the poll and share with their friends and neighbors.
- All meeting materials will be saved to the project website under 'documents' for review. Any further comments may continue to be submitted through the project website.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.