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Calumet-Ridge Streetscape Plan

Neighborhood Poll #1 Summary

Results are in! BIG thanks to the whopping **596** participants who shared input as part of the first ‘Calumet-Ridge Streetscape’ Neighborhood Poll. We received responses from people who feel a strong sense of connection to the Town of Munster. Respondents reported that they call Munster their home (35%), support Calumet Avenue / Ridge Road businesses (30%), Use the Monon Trail and/or Little Calumet River Trail (15%), Stroll or jog in the area (13%) and work in Munster (6%).

Poll #1 Participant Profile | Neighborhood Connection

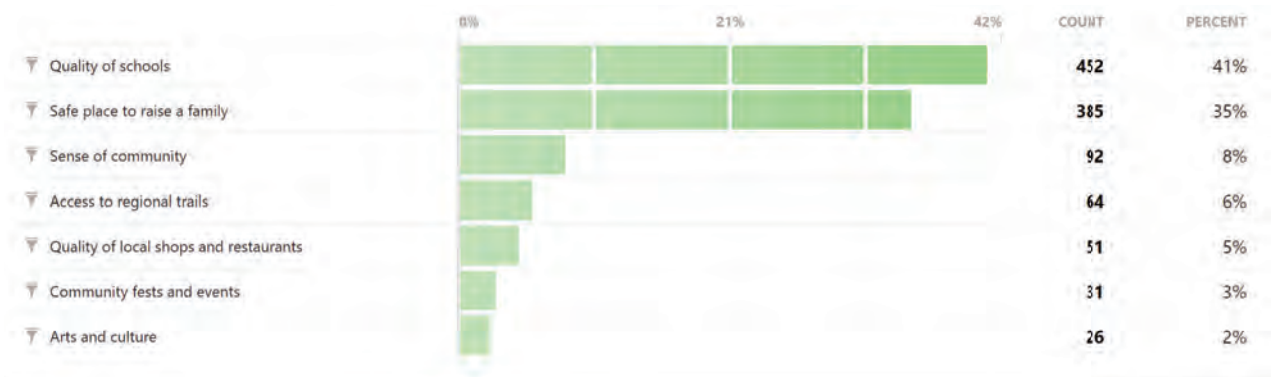




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What do you like about Munster?

When asked what folks like most about Munster, the top two responses were ‘**Quality of schools**’ (41%) and ‘**Safe place to raise a family**’ (35%), followed by ‘Sense of community’ (8%), ‘Access to regional trails’ (6%), ‘Quality of local shops and restaurants’ (5%), ‘Community fests and events’ (3%), and ‘Arts and culture’ (2%).





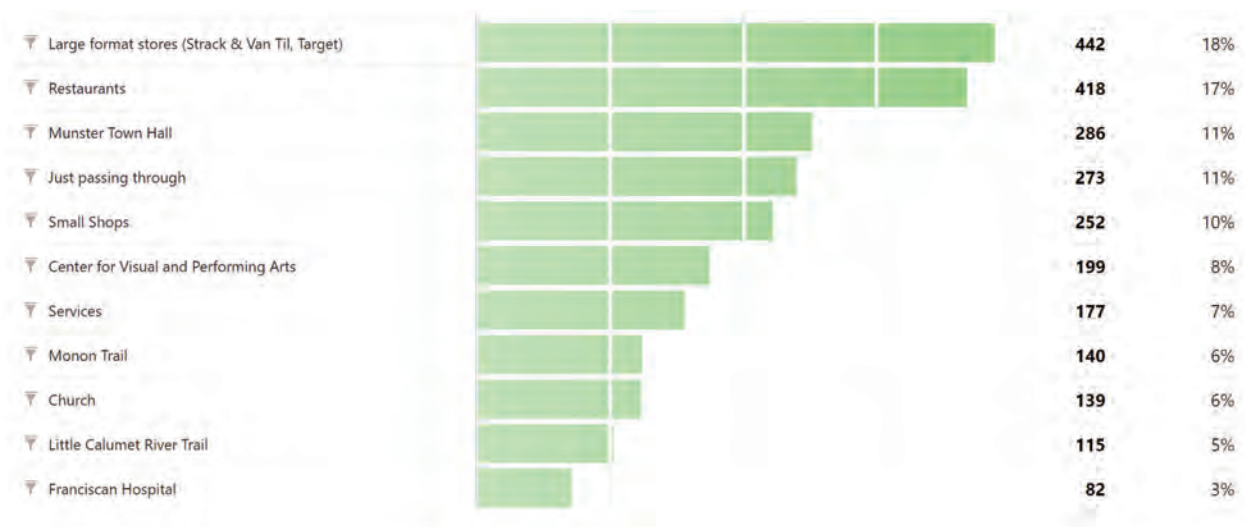
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Identify the reasons for trips to Calumet Ave / Ridge Rd during the past year.

When asked why participants visited Calumet Avenue / Ridge Road during the past year, the top four responses were **‘Large Format stores’** (18%), **‘Restaurants’** (17%), **‘Munster Town Hall’** (11%), and **‘Just passing through’** (11%). Other responses include **‘Small Shops’** (10%), **‘Center for Visual and Performing Arts’** (8%), **‘Services’** (7%), **‘Monon Trail’** (6%), **‘Church’** (6%), **‘Little Calumet River Trail’** (5%), and **‘Franciscan Hospital’** (3%).

51 individual comments were provided. Repeated responses and themes include:

- The Calumet Avenue / Ridge Road corridors are generally considered to be unattractive and unavoidable for those traveling to or from Munster.
- Other noted destinations include the Library, Schools, Post Office, Community Hospital, Gas Stations, and access to I- 80/94.
- Key quotes include:
 - *“Typically driving through. It is a heavily – trafficked area that is not necessarily a friendly environment to visit.”*
 - *“Would love to visit that area, but traffic is too fast to do anything but pass through.”*
 - *“Area is very car-centric, so visits are to stores, in and out. Would be nice to have more walkability, coffee shops, etc.”*





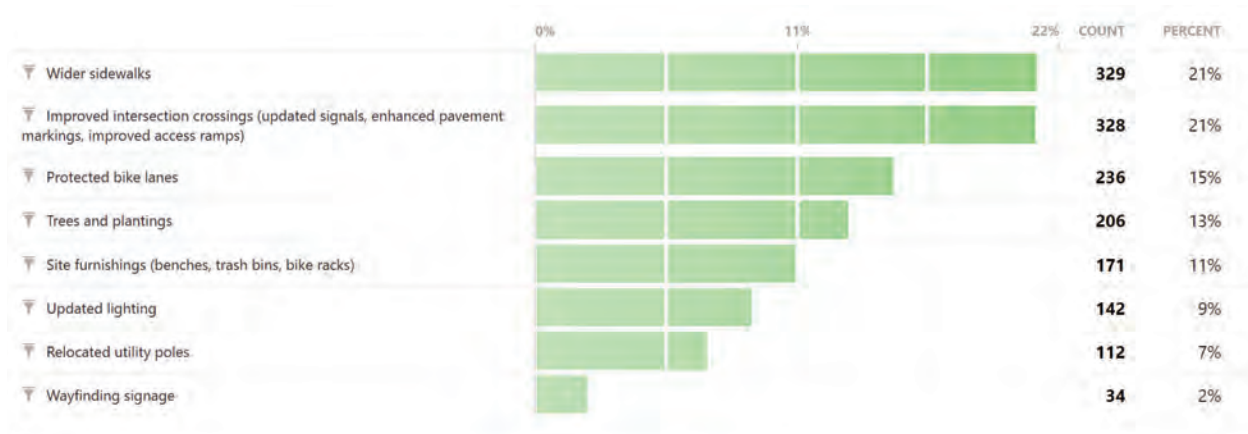
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How likely are you to bike or walk along the Calumet Ave / Ridge Road corridors if the following improvements were made?

When asked how likely participants were to bike or walk along Calumet Avenue / Ridge Road if certain improvements were made, the top three responses were **‘Wider sidewalks’** (21%), **‘Improved intersection crossings’** (21%), and **‘Protected bike lanes’** (15%). Other responses include **‘Trees and plantings’** (13%), **‘Site furnishings’** (11%), **‘Updated lighting’** (9%), **‘Relocated utility poles’** (7%), and **‘Wayfinding signage’** (2%).

92 individual comments were provided. Repeated responses and key themes include:

- Wider sidewalks and multi-use paths were noted as desirable, however channelized and dedicated on-street bike lanes were noted as undesirable.
- Streetscape furnishings (such as planter pots) should be carefully placed so as not to impede movement or motorist visibility.
- Landscape plantings should be well maintained and provide physical separation from roadway and sidewalks.
- Key quotes include:
 - *“Relocated utility poles, wider sidewalks, improved intersection crossings and protected bike lanes are all very critical.”*
 - *“I would not feel comfortable biking on the street but a bike lane on the sidewalk would be great.”*
 - *“Would be great if there was more distance between cars and where people would walk/ride bikes.”*





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If improvements were made, reorder the roadway crossing locations that would serve you best as a biker or walker.

When asked to prioritize intersections for better bike and pedestrian access, the Calumet Ave were generally ranked higher than the Ridge Road intersections. Intersections were ranked as follows:

1. **Calumet Ave at Ridge Road**
2. **Calumet Ave at the Target Development**
3. **Calumet Ave at Broadmoor Ave**
4. **Ridge Road at Columbia Ave**
5. **Ridge Road at Harrison Ave (east)**
6. **Ridge Road at Manor Ave**
7. **Ridge Road at Harrison Ave (west)**
8. **Ridge Road at Hohman Ave**





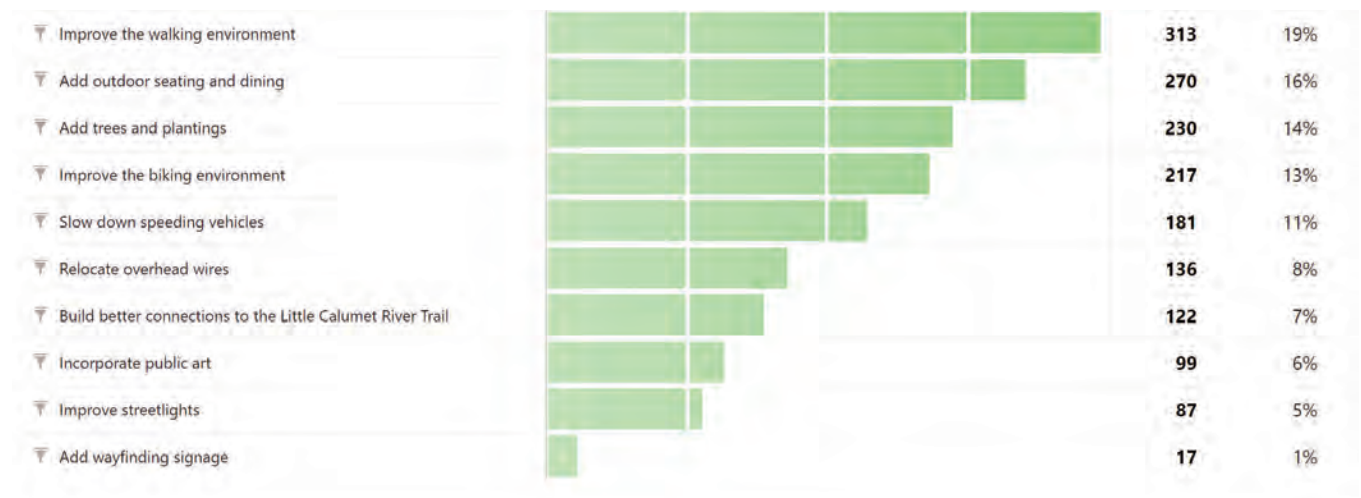
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How would you improve Calumet Avenue?

When asked to identify how participants would improve Calumet Avenue, the top four improvements include **‘Improve the walking environment’** (19%), **‘Add outdoor seating and dining’** (16%), **‘Add trees and plantings’** (14%) and **‘Improve the biking environment’** (13%). Other responses include **‘Slow down speeding vehicles’** (11%), **‘Relocate overhead wires’** (8%), **‘Build better connections to the Little Calumet River Trail’** (7%), **‘Incorporate public art’** (6%), **‘Improve streetlights’** (5%), and **‘Add wayfinding signage’** (1%).

90 individual comments were provided. Repeated comments and key themes include:

- Traffic calming, safety and functionality are of the utmost importance.
- Work with adjacent businesses to improve parking access, building facade improvements and landscaping.
- Improve the north end of Calumet Ave with an attractive gateway sign and landscaping into the community.
- Key quotes include:
 - *“The first things to do would be to improve walking/biking environment by relocating overhead wires and poles and slowing down vehicles. After that, people would feel more comfortable with outdoor seating/dining. Signage, art, trees and connections to the trail would all be great, but we must feel comfortable and safe, first.”*
 - *“It’s the first street that people see when they get off the expressway and there is nothing attractive about it at all (currently).”*





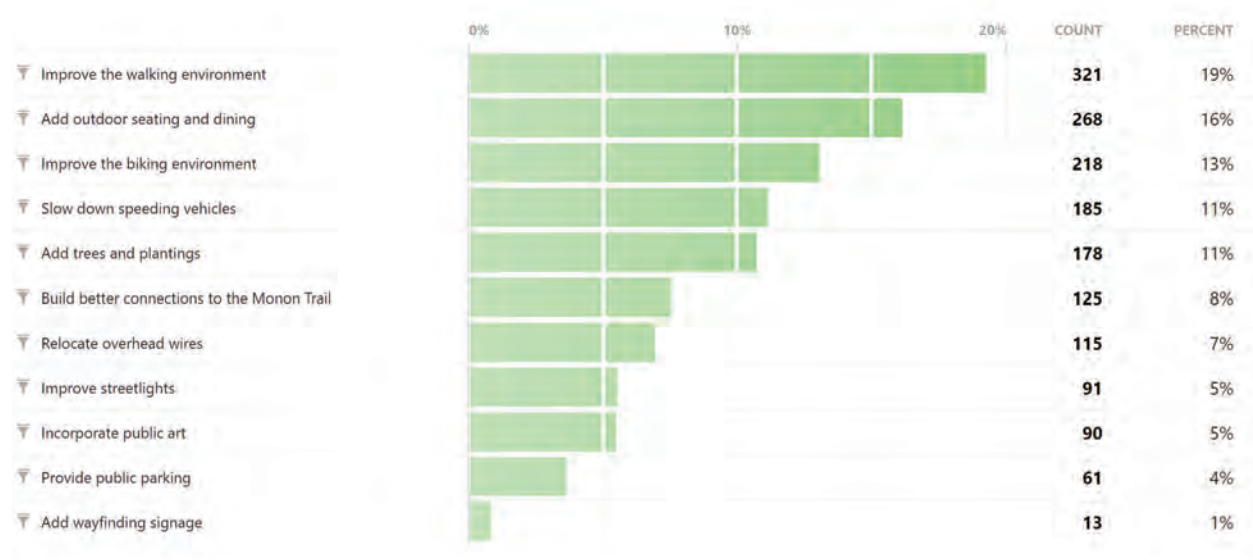
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How would you improve Ridge Road?

When asked to identify how participants would improve Ridge Road, the top three improvements include **'Improve the walking environment'** (19%), **'Add outdoor seating and dining'** (16%), and **'Improve the biking environment'** (13%). Other responses include **'Slow down speeding vehicles'** (11%), **'Add trees and plantings'** (11%), **'Build better connections to the Monon Trail'** (8%), **'Relocate overhead wires'** (7%), **'Improve streetlights'** (5%), **'Incorporate public art'** (5%), **'Provide public parking'** (4%), and **'Add wayfinding signage'** (1%).

53 individual comments were provided. Repeated comments and key themes include:

- Ridge Road has the potential to become a destination if traffic were calmed and sidewalks were better designed.
- Provide improved parking facilities on street and behind businesses as viable.
- Key quotes include:
 - *"Public street parking would be great if we could fit it – much like Lansing's downtown."*
 - *"Ridge should be seen as the best place for a walking, dining, and shopping area."*
 - *"Create a more cohesive look that signifies this is the main "business district". Make it a destination.... need adequate parking and easy access on-off Ridge."*
 - *"Start a street Munster fest once a year."*





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If you had a magic wand, what would you do to improve the Calumet Ave / Ridge Road Corridor?

When asked how participants would envision improvements to Calumet Avenue and Ridge Road, 391 individual comments were provided. Comments are grouped into themes below:

- **Safety first.** Calumet Ave and Ridge Road are generally perceived to be unsafe today – future improvements should consider safety for all modes of transportation.
- **Calm traffic.** Given the corridor’s access to I-80 / 94, and the scale of the roadways, cars tend to speed. Traffic should be calmed to support safer conditions for people.
- **Improve biking and walking.** The Monon Trail, Little Calumet River Trail, local businesses, attractive neighborhoods, and planned train station are draws for biking and walking. Improve the streetscape to support these activities in a safe manner.
- **Create an attractive atmosphere.** Build upon local positive examples of placemaking to improve corridor ambience and attract new quality businesses. Noted local examples include the Monon Trailhead, 313 Taproom, Casa Del Mar and Marko’s Bar and Grill.
- **Declutter the streetscape.** The corridors have a ‘hodge-podge’ appearance today due in part to utility poles, a mixture of historically themed lights and broken concrete planters. Make deliberate streetscape improvements while also maintaining clear views.
- **Make it greener.** The corridors are perceived to have too much asphalt and concrete today. Incorporate appropriately placed native plantings and establish pollinator habitat that connects back to the environment of the Little Calumet River.
- **Work with property owners to improve their curb appeal.** Code enforcement and incentive programs can help to improve the corridor via façade enhancements, business signage, well-organized parking, lighting, and landscaping.
- **Maintenance is key.** A commitment should be made by property owners and the Town of Munster to maintain the streetscape.



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- Key quotes follow below:
 - *“Redesign to safely accommodate people (walkers, bikers) instead of only cars.”*
 - *“Modernize the area and bring in good quality food choices to support the housing industry and shopping industry that is all in this area. Make it feel like a living, shopping, dining experience all within a convenient location. Improve ease of walking with sidewalks.”*
 - *“I would like to see the downtown used similarly to that of other communities for weekly car shows, art fairs, foodie events, community gatherings.”*
 - *“I love the idea of adding flowers and greenery but safety is absolutely #1.”*
 - *“The fact that the sidewalk is right next to the street makes it feel dangerous especially during rush hour.”*
 - *“Revise to less of a “travel through” and more of a “travel to” situation. Add greenery, landscaping and slow down the traffic so that people feel safe walking or biking.”*