



## MUNSTER | CALUMET – RIDGE STREETScape PLAN

### STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS | KEY THEMES

*Prepared by Teska 09/28/2020*

DATE	TIME	INTERVIEW	
7/27	1pm	Lee Ann Mellon, Committee Member, Town President	<a href="mailto:lamellon@munster.org">lamellon@munster.org</a>
7/27	2pm	Dan Buksa, Board of Zoning Appeals	<a href="mailto:djbuksa@yahoo.com">djbuksa@yahoo.com</a>
7/27	3pm	Brian Specht, Plan Commission, Economic Development	<a href="mailto:brian@acbanker.com">brian@acbanker.com</a>
7/27	4pm	Ken Schoon, Committee Member, Town Council	<a href="mailto:kschoon@munster.org">kschoon@munster.org</a>
7/29	8am	Don Erminger, Strack and Van Til	<a href="mailto:ermingerdl@s-vt.com">ermingerdl@s-vt.com</a>
7/29	10am	Rachel Branagan, Committee member, architect, stay at home mom, active in the community	<a href="mailto:rachelbranagan@gmail.com">rachelbranagan@gmail.com</a>
7/29	11am	Hope Martin, Committee, HWC Engineering	<a href="mailto:hmartin@hwcengineering.com">hmartin@hwcengineering.com</a>
7/29	1pm	Chuck Gardiner, Former Parks Director, Council member and plan commission	<a href="mailto:cgardiner@munster.org">cgardiner@munster.org</a>
7/29	2pm	Eman Ibrahim, Planner at NIRPC	<a href="mailto:eibrahim@nirpc.org">eibrahim@nirpc.org</a>
7/29	3pm	Scott Milne, Milne Plumbing, property owner	<a href="mailto:scottmilne1962@gmail.com">scottmilne1962@gmail.com</a>
7/29	4pm	Anthony Christopher, Top Tier Nutrition, Committee	<a href="mailto:team24nwi@yahoo.com">team24nwi@yahoo.com</a>
8/05	2:30pm	Dan Straka, Owner of Sweet Tooth, Committee	<a href="mailto:sweettoothmunster@gmail.com">sweettoothmunster@gmail.com</a>
8/19	1pm	Bill Baker, Chairman of Plan Commission and Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission	<a href="mailto:castleridge@sbcglobal.net">castleridge@sbcglobal.net</a>
8/19	2pm	Bruce Boyer, Local developer (Munster Shops)	<a href="mailto:bruce@boyerconstruction.com">bruce@boyerconstruction.com</a>
8/19	3pm	Patrick Owens, resident	<a href="mailto:patrick_owens@sbcglobal.net">patrick_owens@sbcglobal.net</a>
8/19	4pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ginny Dickman-Lopez, MOMs club president in Munster</li> <li>Joe Austin, Researcher that works at U of C</li> <li>Joe Sinclair, Scout leader and is very interested in active transportation</li> <li>Paul Nelson, helps run What's Up Munster</li> <li>Paul Rotatori, steering committee member former president of the south shore trails advocacy group</li> </ul>	<a href="mailto:virginia.dickman@gmail.com">virginia.dickman@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:omegabrews@yahoo.com">omegabrews@yahoo.com</a> <a href="mailto:sinclair.joseph@gmail.com">sinclair.joseph@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:pjnelson1000@gmail.com">pjnelson1000@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:paul.rotatori@gmail.com">paul.rotatori@gmail.com</a>
09/01	8:30am	Steve Tripinfeldas, Assistant Superintendent, School Town of Munster	<a href="mailto:ststrip@munster.us">ststrip@munster.us</a>
09/23	12:30pm	Steve Tulowitski	<a href="mailto:tulo@munster.org">tulo@munster.org</a>

## **CALUMET AVE**

1. Police crossing guards monitor the Calumet/Ridge intersection for school kids
2. Consider an additional ped crossing between Broadmoor and Ridge
3. South of Ridge:
  - a. students live south of Jewel development; all kids walk to schools and cross north at Ridge or south at Fisher;
  - b. students cross at the Community Park entry drive traffic signal – can this intersection be improved?
  - c. consider a crossing at Briar;
  - d. Students will cross illegally at Calumet
4. Sidewalks are perceived as unsafe, especially between Interstate and Broadmoor
5. Trucks and cars moving at high speeds.
6. No left turns permitted from Seberger and 30<sup>th</sup> (signage only), lacks enforcement, comments about adding landscaped medians at Calumet as a way to enforce no left turns onto Calumet
7. Consider smarter traffic signals that are synchronized to meet the Town's transportation goals
8. Utility poles should be relocated to the rear of properties/alleys
9. Reduce curb cuts
10. Incorporate sustainable materials / practices
11. Decorative signal poles and light poles should be incorporated
12. Calumet/Ridge intersection is challenging for trucks to make turns (use all 4 lanes to make turns)
13. Munster Shops (Five Guys)
  - a. Designed as an internal streetscape with ped amenities, wide sidewalks
  - b. 135' depth, 22' drive aisle, 18' parking spaces, parking bumpers
  - c. Installed and maintains high visibility plantings at parking lot perimeter and ROW; requires a lot of maintenance. Planters are occasionally hit by trucks and reconstructed but considered by the developer/owner to be worth the extra maintenance to improve the curb appeal of the development
14. Consider a traffic signal at 30<sup>th</sup>, offset with Panera access
15. Consider a 'hawk signal' at 30<sup>th</sup>
16. Surrounding neighborhood streets lack sidewalks

## **RIDGE ROAD**

1. Major student crossings occur at Columbia/Ridge and Calumet/Ridge
2. Consider an additional ped crossing between Harrison and Calumet to serve the neighborhoods (such as Jackson)
3. The two Harrison signals don't feel safe to pedestrians, the timing caters to cars
4. Unlike Calumet, Ridge has more opportunities, more promise. General support to improve Ridge Road to feel more like a walkable downtown with wider sidewalks and amenities.
5. During peak times, the Ridge/Calumet intersection is backed up along Ridge Road to Dairy Queen and Howards
6. Ridge Road runs parallel to the interstate, used as a more efficient way to travel south without having to access I-94; is used as a cut through between Calumet City to Indianapolis Blvd
7. Outdoor dining will continue to be more desirable in the future

8. Ridge Road can and should be more walkable
9. Ridge Road sees additional traffic when an accident occurs on I-94
10. Consider smarter traffic signals that are synchronized to meet the Town's transportation goals
11. Consider additional signals for more pedestrian crossings
12. Strack and Van Til (Strack's)
  - a. Attractive landscaped perimeter / Town entry sign is a gateway into town
  - b. Strack's parking lot is challenged; slope impedes visibility and egress
  - c. Truck deliveries enter via South Ave at Homan and exit through the parking lot.  
Deliveries occur 7am – 10pm, 54' trailer
  - d. 245 parking stalls, however parking is insufficient during major holidays (nearby Church allows for employee parking during holidays)
13. Vehicular conflicts between McDs and strip development (Jimmy Johns) across the street.  
Consider making McD's a RI/RO to minimize conflicts
14. Milne Plumbing Supply
  - a. Trucks access via the rear alley
15. Utility poles should be relocated to the rear of properties/alleys
16. Decorative signal poles and light poles should be incorporated
17. Flexible public places / plazas would get use if designed well. Centennial Park has movies in the park, dance recitals, Parks Dept activities)
18. If an improved parking / events plaza were to occur at Meadow Lane, maintain residential access to the north
19. Kaske House and Bieker Woods at Columbia/Ridge – historical interpretation about Munster, school/educational programming; Boy Scouts help maintain the Kaske House – can scouts get involved in streetscape implementation
20. Good crossings are at White Oak/ Ridge and Columbia/Ridge
21. Consider roundabouts if possible (Roundabout exists at Forest Ave / Broadmoor)
22. Reduce curb cuts
23. Incorporate sustainable materials / practices
24. The Monon Trail needs to be better aligned at Ridge. People dismount and cross at the signal
25. Some drivers think Ridge Road has on street parking and illegally park there
26. Surrounding neighborhood streets lack sidewalks

## **BROADMOOR AVE**

1. Roadway would be a good opportunity for biking, however it is not marked

## **JACKSON / MONROE / MADISON / JEFFERSON (PRESIDENT STREETS)**

1. These streets see speeding traffic, possible bypasses for Calumet to travel north-south

## **SEBERGER**

1. Acts as a 'shortcut' through the neighborhood, speeding traffic
2. Can Seberger be more bike friendly?

## **HARRISON**

1. Harrison signals are currently timed to help traffic, but are not supportive of pedestrian crossings.
2. Consider realigning Harrison Signals (if private property becomes available)

## **BIKE LANES**

1. Indiana has great 'bike highways', but going off of the trail requires more creativity to access businesses and downtowns.
2. Columbia is not a safe route
3. Broadmoor is better for bikers
4. Should be protected / off street
5. Consider bike lanes that have movement and interest (curvilinear) so they are not so monotonous

## **MAINTENANCE**

1. Concerns about how the streetscape will be maintained; "These things (maintenance) need to be put into the recipe"
2. Budget for Maintenance

## **PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT**

1. Many families are moving to Munster from Illinois. Main attractors are schools and hospital.
2. Public perception that condos are better maintained and therefore more desirable than apartments.
3. Density may not be a popular
4. Centennial Village: condos above commercial. 4 buildings planned, 4 stories; hotel is 4 stories; underpass access road planned
5. Shops of Munster – parking is very crowded (lot depth is 135' and travel lanes are 22'); some people park on Ridgeway to access this development
6. Outdoor dining is addressed with special use permits (such as 313 Brewery)

## AESTHETICS

1. Past architectural treatments and references, bungalows, wood beams, railroad history, Town Hall – colonial; Not modern treatments, but arts and crafts, mixture of steel and wood
2. Historic Munster brownstones can be found behind Mishkenut
3. Munster is distinct because of its connection to the historic shoreline:
  - a. Shoreline / Indian Trail historically was a beach, then a stagecoach route 1850s, then US federal Highway / Route 6. When I-94 was built, Route 6 was relocated to I-94
  - b. History is shared with Lansing, IL and Highland, IN
  - c. Ridge Rd geometry is angled as was the shoreline (littoral drift)
4. Munster's color scheme: red and white (High School colors)
5. Aesthetics should incorporate rustic, native materials such as wood and stone
6. Concrete planters / walls with reveals for public art (mosaic)
7. Reference to Lake Michigan, Indiana Dunes, historic shoreline, smooth stones and pebbles
8. Murals should be incorporated
9. Incorporate art projects (similar to Chicago Cows on Parade)
10. Entry sign – see Highland's entry sign, backlit channel letters on stone
11. Antique lights along Ridge Road have mismatched bulbs, broken banner arms
12. Add more pocket parks, benches, places to gather, events
13. Add branded signage
14. The connections to the land (historic shoreline, native plants) connects and unifies us all
15. "The grand calumet river was the most polluted river in N America (steel mills, chemical plants, oil refineries, no fish living in the water. Over the last 50 years has been a major change, Indiana was once called the armpit of America. Now the air is so much cleaner, salmon are spawning, blue herons seen, American eagles spotted, great egrets, tourism – people are coming here to see the lake and to see things. The area has changed terrificly and the streetscape is a part of that. " (Ken Schoon)

## LANDSCAPING

1. Center medians would be positive improvements; limits left turn access, demonstrates long term improvements.
2. Add spring blooming plants / bulbs
3. Concerns that native plantings / rain gardens will look like weed patches (see Valparaiso's rain gardens)
4. Landscaping as a symbol of unity

## **COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY**

1. Traffic and lane reductions may be a tough sell to the community – show how private properties remain intact
2. School PTO; Munster Neighborhood Crimewatch (community policing newsletter); What's Up Munster (facebook)
3. Explain how plans will eventually be implemented

## **PILOT PROJECTS**

1. Focus on 2 block streetscape redevelopment along Ridge
2. Consider improving the ½ block of Meadow north of Ridge as formalized parking and a temporary events plaza; engage local businesses, food trucks, mural art on building
3. Consider a pilot on Calumet (Munster Donut, Johnny's Tap, Nat's Barber Shop, Florist)

## **EXAMPLES FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES**

1. Lansing, IL Ridge Road implemented a road diet some years ago, well received by businesses and community
2. Park City Utah – parklets for temporary sidewalk dining
3. Downtown LaGrange and Western Springs example, Ogden is major connector and La Grange Road is walkable downtown.
4. Ridge Road in Homewood
5. Amsterdam bike lanes
6. Whiting, IN (119<sup>th</sup> St)
7. Highland, IN – Ridge Road becomes Old Highway, painted murals near ice cream shop
8. Crown Point / Valparaiso – revitalized corridors and downtown areas; rain gardens
9. Valparaiso – downtown district, Lincolnway Street. The community uses valet parking because the district is such a large draw; restaurants, parks, skating rink, decorative lighting, brick streets.
10. Amsterdam – large median with sculptures (rotating)

## **PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

1. Funding opportunities – FTA Federal Transit Authority, streetscape funding, NIRPC can provide contacts to FTA for potential funding; emphasize TOD along Ridge Road
2. Munster Civic Foundation – funding for public projects (such as public art) may be applied to the streetscape plan