



**To:** President and Members of the Munster Town Council

**From:** Dustin Anderson, Town Manager  
Tom Vander Woude, Planning Director

**Date:** April 28, 2022

**Re:** Request for approval of a professional services contract with Houseal Lavigne Associates

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The purpose of this memo is to request Town Council approval of a service contract with Houseal Lavigne Associates. (Houseal Lavigne) of Chicago, Illinois in an amount not to exceed \$171,045 to develop a comprehensive plan for the Town of Munster.

**Background:**

A comprehensive plan is the official statement of a local government establishing policies for its future long-range development. The comprehensive plan draws upon public and stakeholder involvement and data analysis to develop a vision, goals, and strategies typically for the future land use, transportation, economic development, the environment, and natural resources of a community.

Munster's current comprehensive plan was adopted in 2010. The plan identified six guiding principles for future development:

1. Promote Sustainable Growth
2. Support Transit as Critical to a Prosperous Town
3. Create a Legacy of Unique Parks and Open Spaces
4. Grow as A Hub of the Regional Trail System
5. Strengthen Infrastructure to Meet Future Needs
6. Redevelop Old Areas as Walkable, Mixed Use Centers

Since 2010, the Town has made tangible progress towards achieving that vision. The Town has implemented multiple redevelopment projects, participated in TOD planning activities, adopted a new zoning ordinance, and completed a streetscaping plan for Ridge Road and Calumet Avenue. Other projects have not been completed, either because of a longer time horizon, shifting priorities, lack of funding or site control, or other external factors. Most notably, the 21010 plan called for a transit village to be established around a proposed NICTD commuter rail station in the center of the community. Since the adoption of the plan, the NICTD plans were modified and now include two stations, a southern station at Main Street and a northern station at Manor Avenue and Ridge Road.

It is a planning best practice to update a community's comprehensive plan approximately every 10 years or more frequently if the community is experiencing rapid change. As noted above, the Town of Munster has experienced significant change since 2010. In light of this change and in the interest of updating the vision for the town, the Town Council directed staff to seek proposals for a new comprehensive plan and budgeted \$200,000 for that effort.

Houseal Lavigne was selected for recommendation through a qualifications-based, public process. In December 2021, after seeking input and direction from the Town Council and Plan Commission, staff distributed a request for proposals for the plan. We received six responses. A selection committee that included the Town Council President, Town Manager, Department Heads, and the Town Engineer reviewed and scored the responses and selected three firms to interview. At the conclusion of the interviews, the committee determined that the Houseal Lavigne team was the most qualified.

Houseal Lavigne has extensive experience developing comprehensive plans for municipalities throughout the Chicago region, Indiana, and the United States. They are teaming with Troyer Group, which is based in Mishawaka, Indiana. The attached proposal includes more details about their qualifications.

The attached contract includes a scope of services that includes an extensive level of public and stakeholder involvement. The plan will include recommendations for land use, transportation, housing, community facilities and infrastructure, parks and open space, economic development, and arts and culture. The process will be guided by staff and an advisory committee. Upon completion of the plan, we will present it to the Plan Commission and the Town Council for adoption.

The total cost of the project is not to exceed \$171,045. The schedule calls for completion of the project in 14 months. As noted above, the Town has budgeted for this expense.

**Recommendation:**

Authorize the Town Manager to enter into a services agreement with Houseal Lavigne Associates. in an amount not to exceed \$171,045 to develop a comprehensive plan for the Town of Munster.

**Attachments:**

1. Agreement Between Town of Munster and Houseal Lavigne Associates, Inc. including project scope
2. Houseal Lavigne Associates original proposal