



MEMO

TO: President Gardiner and Members of Council

FROM: Town Manager

SUBJECT: 2022 RAISE Grant Agreement

DATE: May 15, 2023

Background

The idea to improve Ridge Road was first addressed in the Town's 2010 Comprehensive Plan. The Council members, staff, and residents at that time highlighted opportunities and desires for the corridor. In 2020, with the South Shore train extension closer to a reality, the Council decided it was a good time to address what had been talked about for years. The Town hired a consultant to develop a plan to improve stormwater runoff, reduce neighborhood street flooding, improve walking and biking connectivity, and make the corridor more attractive and safer overall. It was a year-long process that included extensive community outreach activity that engaged both staff, businesses along the corridor, school administration, and residents for their input.

Methodology

The aforementioned process produced a concept plan. Now it is time to engage a design engineering firm and traffic specialist to conduct more in-depth analyses. The design and engineering phase will include more public discussion and full staff input including our Fire and Police departments. It will analyze current and projected traffic volumes, traffic speed, potential spill over to neighboring streets, emergency vehicle accessibility, and safety improvement strategies. It will also identify solutions for long-term issues like the double stoplight at Harrison, the volume of curb cuts, and the abundance of unsightly utility poles. The goal is to produce an outcome that all residents can be proud of and one that will improve the quality of life along the Ridge Road corridor.

The project will invest \$21 million into the northern part of Munster, with only \$4 million coming from the Town due to a large federal grant we received in 2022. The \$4 million will be taken from money on-hand that must be used for capital projects. By law, it cannot be used for personnel salaries or other operating expenses.

The project budget is as follows:

	Base Phase: Preliminary Engineering	Component 1: Ridge Road	Total
RAISE Funds:	\$1,328,940	\$15,814,380	\$17,143,320
Other Federal Funds:	\$0	\$0	\$0
Non-Federal Funds:	\$332,235	\$3,953,595	\$4,285,830
Total:	\$1,661,175	\$19,767,975	\$21,429,150

The value of this grant is \$17,143,320. The Town's portion of the project is \$4,285,830.

After award, the project will commence in two phases: design engineering, then construction. This is laid out in Part 2 of Schedule D of the grant agreement, illustrated here:

Obligations Allocation and Condition Table		
Portion of the Project	Allocation from RAISE Grant	Obligation Condition
Base Phase: Preliminary Engineering	\$1,328,940	
Component 1: Ridge Road	\$15,814,380	If the FHWA State Division Office approves the PS&E for the Project and the Recipient has met all the applicable Federal, State, and local requirements.

What this table means practically – with confirmation from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – is that design engineering is a discreet and separate phase of the project. The Town would spend \$332,235 to receive \$1,328,940 from the Department of Transportation to study Ridge Road and develop solutions to improve the safety of this corridor that utilizes best practices of complete street construction.

It will take at least a year to complete engineering of the roadway. It is estimated that Ridge Road would be substantially complete (all lanes open for through traffic) by December 31, 2026.

Recommendation

By motion and roll-call vote, authorize the Town Manager to execute the agreement between the Federal Highway Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Town of Munster for an award of \$17,143,320 to improve 1.3 miles of Ridge Road.