



Community Profile

Town of Munster, Indiana

2021

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COMMUNITY-AT-A-GLANCE

Community name: Town of Munster, Indiana

Phone: 219-836-6900

County/township: Lake County / North Township

Contact name: Dustin Anderson, Town Manager

AIB committee chair contact: Tom Vander Woude, Planning Director

Population: 22,476

Website: www.munster.org

Area in square miles: 7.57 sq mi

Acres of recreation: 344.5 total

Acres of active recreation: unknown

Acres of passive recreation: unknown

Form of government (mayor, council, manager, etc.): The form of government is Council-Manager, with 5-person elected Council that appoints a Town Manager.

What jurisdiction(s) operates the public-school system? School Town of Munster

What jurisdiction operates the utilities (water, sewer, electrical, trash, recycling, etc.)?

- Water: provided by the City of Hammond and the Town of Munster Utility
- Sewer: Sanitary sewer is provided by the Hammond Sanitary District
- Gas/Electric: provided by NIPSCO
- Curbside Trash and Recycling collection: provided by Homewood Disposal Service

Do you have a volunteer coordinator? No

Have there been any challenges this year weather-related or otherwise, the judges should know about?

A national pandemic was declared in March of 2020. As a municipality, we complied with state-issued executive orders and followed stay at home orders, and this impacted the way we conducted business and interacted with our residents. We were resilient and the opportunity created new opportunities for our community that may evolve into new traditions.

Years participated in America in Bloom National Awards Program: This is our first year.

Introduction to your community (500 words or less):

Munster, Indiana is in Lake County, Indiana, 30 miles southeast of the Chicago Downtown Loop. Since its incorporation in 1907, the Town of Munster has evolved into an established and prosperous community of 22,476 residents, serving as a cultural and medical hub for the greater Northwest Indiana region. Today, Munster is almost completely developed and exists as a stable, community of primarily mid to late 20th century neighborhoods with an extensive parks and trails system.

In 2010, the Town of Munster adopted a comprehensive plan that identified six guiding principles for its 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

This vision plan marked a formal reconsideration of the future direction of the Town and a reorientation from an auto-oriented bedroom community to a community of walkable, mixed use centers linked together by complete streets. The plan can be viewed here: <https://www.munster.org/egov/docs/1340988647610.pdf>

Since 2010, the Town has made tangible progress towards achieving that vision.

Centennial Village

Construction has begun on Centennial Village, a sustainable, mixed-use, walkable community at the intersection of Calumet Avenue and 45th Street built on the site of a former steel plant. This project will be completed in phases over the next 6-8 years. The redevelopment will also provide the Town of Munster the necessary land area to facilitate the design and construction of the 45th Street underpass and realignment. Additional information can be found here: <http://www.munster.org/category/subcategory.php?categoryid=28>.



Westlake TOD

The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) is developing the Westlake Corridor, an approximately 8-mile extension of the existing South Shore Line (SSL) between Dyer and Hammond, Indiana. This extension will provide commuter rail access from two stations in Munster to downtown Chicago. Working in partnership with the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority and NICTD, the Town undertook a public planning process to develop plans for transit-oriented development around two commuter rail stations. This project concluded in summer of 2017 with the completion of regulating plans and conceptual form-based zoning schemes for the station areas.

WHAT IS THE PREFERRED TOD VISION?

A MASTER PLAN BASED ON COMMUNITY INPUT

MUNSTER RIDGE ROAD



Additional information about the Westlake Corridor can be found here: <http://www.nictdwestlake.com/>.

Livable Munster: Character-Based Code

In early 2018, the Town of Munster enlisted the services of the Town Planning and Urban Design Collaborative to rewrite the Town's zoning ordinance as a form-based code. The Town held multiple public involvement events during 2018 and adopted a new code in December 2019. The new code promotes walkable, high-quality mixed-use development.

The project website is online here: <https://www.munster.org/category/subcategory.php?categoryid=30>

Calumet-Ridge Streetscape Plan

Munster is completing a streetscape plan focused on the Calumet – Ridge corridor areas. Historically the crossroads of Munster, the goal of this project is to develop a more welcoming environment for walking, biking, to reinforce a sense of place in our community, and to enhance their ability to absorb stormwater and reduce flooding.



Key themes of the plan include:

- A safe and comfortable pedestrian environment
- A functional streetscape providing stormwater benefits
- A consistent and beautiful public realm
- A sense of arrival and identity
- A multimodal system that balances access and mobility

Project documents can be found at www.munster-streetscape.org.



Town of Munster

COMMUNITY VITALITY

The Town of Munster is widely regarded as a cultural and recreational hub in Lake County.

The Town park system is over 400 acres in size, and together with recreational space at local school's, accounts for about 15% of land within the Munster community. With 29 different parks, a park or open greenspace is never far from any part of Town. Additionally, a substantially growing bike path system connects neighborhoods to many destinations including schools, parks, retail establishments, restaurants, and a vibrant medical district.

In the center of Munster is a civic campus centered around Community Park. After coordinated planning over several years, the 50-acre park is adjoined by Munster High School, Wilbur Wright Middle School, Lake County Public Library's Munster Branch, Boy Scouts of America's offices, Center for Visual and Performing Arts, and Bieker Woods which all act as a center hub of Town. Community Park itself boasts the Munster Community Pool, 10 ball fields, the Munster Lions Shelter, the Munster Rotary Shelter, a Firefighter's Memorial, numerous walking paths, a skatepark, an indoor Social Center, a playground, and hundreds of living tree memorials.

The largest park in Munster, Centennial Park, was opened in 2007, to celebrate the Town's Centennial. This 200-acre 'destination park' is on the site of a former landfill and offers numerous walking trails, a 9-hole golf course, fitness stairs, a banquet facility, an off-leash dog park, shelters, the Munster Lions Entertainment Stage, formal gardens, Maynard Lake, and a section of the heavily used Pennsy Greenway trail.

Throughout the Town of Munster, various amenities will be found in the park system including River's Edge Disc Golf Course, baseball fields, softball fields, soccer fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, volleyball courts, pickleball courts, a lacrosse field, fishing opportunity, playgrounds, shelters, public art and memorials, sledding opportunity, a skate park, a swimming pool, walking paths and more.

The Town of Munster is proud to offer hundreds of recreational programs and activities each year. These not only service residents but also attract people from other cities and towns to the Munster community. Every year Munster Parks and Recreation seeks to provide recreational opportunity through parks, people, and programs. By providing safe, well-kept, and diverse recreational facilities in the parks is a great way to help bring people of all ages to the parks for various recreational purpose. To further promote the parks and people that use them, Munster Parks and Recreation offers programs that use many of the park facilities to help expose participants to something that they otherwise may not have tried. It also helps to bring people together with similar interests and thus builds friendships and a stronger community

PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF EFFORTS IN COMMUNITY VITALITY:

2020 Metric Heading Examples with Brief Narratives for Community Vitality

CV.a.01 - Municipal volunteer boards:

The Town of Munster provides multiple opportunities for volunteers to participate in local government. The Board of Parks and Recreation oversees the various operations and activities of the Munster Parks and Recreation Department and meets the first and third Tuesday of each month. The community development process is overseen by two volunteer boards: the 5-member Board of Zoning Appeals and the 7-member Plan Commission. The Police and Fire Departments are overseen by a 5-member Board of Safety.

In 1994, the Choice Community Council of Munster was founded as a collaborative effort between the Munster Police Department and the residents of Munster. The purpose of the organization is to promote events and programs that are aimed at drug, gang, crime, and violence prevention in Munster. Participation is open to any Munster resident who would like to help plan or volunteer for their programs which have included special speakers (drug addiction, teen suicide, bullying, etc.), the town's annual Red Ribbon Week Poster Contest, the Munster Dog

Walker Watch Program, the Munster Neighborhood & Business Watch Programs, the Police & Fire Charity Softball Event, and the National Night Out Against Crime Celebration. Their organization also sponsored the police department's McGruff the Crime Dog costume which is used for many crime prevention campaigns through social media and makes appearances during community policing events. The group meets quarterly and includes many dedicated residents.

CV.a.02 - Municipality offers grants to neighborhood associations for enhancements: NA

CV.a.04 - ADA accessibility in public areas and other programs for inclusion:

In 2019, the Town added a unique playground at Sunnyside Park which is likely the only kind in Lake County, Indiana. 'Chance's Kingdom', named for Chance Jurgens, a local boy with Asperger syndrome who accidentally died a year earlier, was the inspiration for a sensory play area at his favorite park with all new equipment including giant flowers that kids can play as musical instruments, a large sensory arch and colorful rubber mulch.

ADA accessibility is something that the Town of Munster is continually evaluating and updating at all Town facilities. In the last year, all park parking lots were brought up to standard by adding, restriping, and labeling designated spaces at each parking lot. All the Town's playgrounds are built with accessibility in mind. As playgrounds are updated, accessible routes are included as part of the development which highlights accessible play equipment and fall zone safety surfacing. In 2017, the Town used its biannual allotment of Community Development Block Grant funds to invest approximately \$100,000 in ADA improvements at Centennial Park.

The Town Department of Public Works upgrades sidewalk curb ramps annually so accessible routes are available wherever sidewalks exist. All new developments are required to comply with ADA standards.

CV.b.01- Describe outdoor recreation facilities play areas and maintenance:

Outdoor recreation facilities are plentiful in Munster. With 18 playgrounds, a skate park, a 9 hole golf course, a golf driving range, 19 ball fields, 10 basketball hoops, 14 outdoor shelters, a gazebo, 16 soccer fields, 15 tennis courts, 14 walking paths, 4 pickleball courts, a gaga ball pit, a ninja warrior fitness course, a set of fitness stairs, fishing at Maynard Lake, an entertainment stage, River's Edge Disc Golf course, an off-leash dog park, a zero depth swimming pool with slides and diving boards, and almost ten miles of off-street bike path there is always something to do in Munster to satisfy the outdoor recreational needs.

CV.b.02 - Walking, biking, and exercise trail network, and/or events:

As the highest desired amenity, the Town has sought to provide adequate walking and biking areas. Fourteen of the local parks have trails within the park boundaries. Plus, there are larger biking trails within Town including the Pennsy Greenway, Monon Greenway and the Fisher Street Greenway. All these trails are not only in Munster but connect with neighboring Towns for an even further expansive recreation opportunity. In 2020, a pedestrian bridge was installed over 45th Avenue to help create a safe passage route to the Town's destination, Centennial Park. In 2018, the Town installed a unique facility of fitness stairs at Centennial Park. This facility raises 45 feet over 82 total stairs on the site of a former landfill.

The Town annually offers a bike ride program called Spokes and Sprockets to teach kids about bikes and rules of the road. Additionally, yoga is offered on the entertainment stage in the summertime. A very popular program is the Ladies Empowerment Walk, which is an ongoing program to coach participants on how to let go of things that weigh you down mentally, physically, and emotionally. Further, plans are in the works for a 15-mile night bike ride in the summer of 2021 on the Pennsy Greenway trail with a neighboring community to highlight this major bike route in Northwest Indiana.

CV.b.03 - Performances/events for art, dance, theatre, music, and/or cinema:

The Town of Munster has an award-winning public art tour called 'Art on the Town'. A cooperative effort between the Town Council, the Munster Public Art Committee, the Munster Civic Foundation, and corporate sponsors has provided a visual showcase throughout Town as a public art tour.

The Town annually sponsors a Summer Concert Series and hosts concerts at the Gazebo at Heritage Park as well as on the Munster Town Hall municipal campus. There are also events such as movies in the park, concerts, fireworks, dance performances by local studios, local theatrical productions and even a Boy Scout Pinewood Derby at the Centennial Park Lions Club Entertainment Stage. Many of these events bring people together to celebrate the arts, dance, music, and theater by partnering with local studios, theaters, and other non-profit organizations.

The Town is home to The Center for Visual and Performing Arts(CVPA), a multi-purpose facility built by the Community Foundation of Northwest Indiana, Inc. to support the cultural and arts education needs of the region. The 72,660-square-foot facility, which opened in 1989, provides services for meetings, seminars, banquets, weddings, dinners, theater, and fine arts. An elegant dining room can accommodate up to 500 guests or be divided for smaller parties. Other unique space options are available, including smaller rooms to accommodate private parties and business meetings. The CVPA is home to the following:

- Theatre At the Center is a professional theatre that features Broadway's brightest musicals and plays and Chicago-area premiers. Theatre at the Center's intimate 416-seat theatre is a popular entertainment destination in the Midwest.
- South Shore Arts is a nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming the South Shore through the arts. The organization conducts over 400 classes each year in all media for all ages and presents more than 20 exhibitions each year, showcasing regional, national, and international artists and cultures.
- Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra is the region's own premiere classical music organization. Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra features a full season of classical and pops concerts and sponsors a Youth Orchestra and a chorus that is more than 100 members strong.

CV.b.08 - Public library/resources center/programs:

The Lake County Public Library – Munster Branch is part of the larger Lake County Public Library system. Interior space allows for 50,000 books, audio visual material, magazines and seating for adults and children. They have a meeting room that can accommodate 75 people. The Munster Branch provides programs for kids of all ages.

CV.b.09 - Describe the community center:

While the Town of Munster does not have a designated community center, there is a great relationship with the local school district to use their facilities when available. Access to their indoor pool, school gyms, hallways for craft shows and space for day camp participants is made available for programmed use. Shared use of athletic facilities is also a way to expand recreational opportunity in the community at other publicly funded facilities.

The Social Center at Community Park is a small indoor facility that hosts indoor recreational programming such as 'Keen-agers' (a daily senior's group), karate lessons, arts and craft classes, fitness classes, and more in a multi-purpose room facility. Additional recreation is offered as the facility is available to rent for family functions and get-togethers to celebrate together.

CV.b.10 - Farmers' Market(s) location and frequency:

The Town of Munster offers a 'Community Market' at Community Park every year. These twice a month markets are held from June – September on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. The seasonal market offers fresh, local produce, flowers, prepared foods, hand-crafted items, live music, and local businesses. The market will house upwards of 30 vendors.

CV.c.01 - Community gardening sites:

The Munster Garden Club maintains the garden beds in front of the Munster Town Hall. This area has been maintained by these volunteers for years. Additionally, a community garden program was started a few years ago at Cobblestone Park that was spearheaded by some community volunteers. Those plots are planted and maintained annually by individual or group volunteers. Munster High School, Eads Elementary School, and Elliot Elementary School provide the public with access to community gardens.

CV.c.05 - Programs to encourage youth involvement:

Munster Parks and Recreation Department organizes an exhaustive list of programs and activities each year. These opportunities are shared with the public by sending out three parks and recreation guides every year that are usually about 40 pages deep. The youth opportunities are about 1/3 of all programs and activities offered by the department.

One of the programs offered is the 'Kids in the Park Series'. This free program teaches youth to get involved in their community through park clean-ups, pool clean-ups and even a yoga in the park. This program helps to beautify the parks by picking up debris, pulling weeds, planting flowers, teaching about opening of the Community Park Pool, and connecting with nature through yoga outside in a park.

Since 1997, the Munster Police Department has sponsored the Munster Police Explorers Post #197. The program is open to young men and women, ages 14-21, who have an interest in either a career in law enforcement or serving their community in a positive way. The members meet on a regular basis to learn about the roles of law enforcement and can get to know our town's police officers in a positive way. The Explorers also are able to go on ride-alongs with police officers and provide community service hours throughout the year during various events. Several former members of the Explorers Program have gone on to successful careers in law enforcement, including some who became Munster Police officers.

In addition, Munster High School students are encouraged to assist with mentoring our elementary students in several ways against the dangers of drug abuse, bullying, and other dangerous decisions. Our police department's Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) Program provides safety lessons to approximately 2,000 Munster students in grades K-8 each school year, and the capstone of the program involves the high school students traveling with the town's D.A.R.E. officer to meet with and answer questions from the fifth-grade students about resisting peer pressure and the importance of making positive choices. The students are chosen based on their grades, involvement in positive activities, and their commitment to stay drug-free. These are always very memorable presentations for the students.

Each year, over 100 Munster High School students also help with mentoring fifth grade students through the police department's "Snow flurry" program which involves over 200 fifth grade students each year. The program is held as a collaborative effort between the town's schools and police department and involves the high school students leading and mentoring the fifth graders through a variety of different activities throughout the event. The goal of the program is to teach the students about treating others with respect and the importance of making safe and healthy choices, and the event would not be successful without the high school students' willingness to assist with and make the event memorable for the participating fifth graders.

CV.c.06 - Recognition programs for volunteers:

The Munster Police Department recognizes residents, businesses, or community service organizations each year during the town's National Night Out Against Crime Celebration at the Munster Community Pool. The Citizenship Award is presented to recipients who have provided a great amount of work or support during the past year towards positive community policing programs and initiatives. The award ceremonies are always a highlight of the event each year.

The Munster Chamber of Commerce annually recognizes a Volunteer of the Year and a Citizen of the Year. The Citizen of the Year is selected by prior Citizen of the Year recipients. They are selected based on a demonstration of leadership and services in the interest of the Chamber and the community and whose civic activities do the greatest good for the largest number of people. The Volunteer of the Year is selected based on the individual's commitment to the Chamber and promoting member businesses.

Munster residents give back to the park system by participating in 'Park Pride Day'. This annual event is a celebration of Earth Day where all are welcome to help clean-up and beautify the park by picking up debris, mulching trees, and planting of flowers. This volunteerism is recognized by providing a complimentary lunch and t-shirt for those that participate.

Additionally, Munster Parks and Recreation will utilize hundreds of volunteers throughout the year to assist with many of the programs and activities offered to the community. Special events would not be possible without the volunteerism from the community including Project X and National Honor Society members from Munster High School. Other sources of volunteers come from Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, local corporate employees, staff family members, and anyone who is willing to assist to build a stronger community through parks and recreation.



Community Park



Center for Visual and Performing Arts



Chance's Kingdom

FLOWERS

FL.a.01 - Public or private management of flower displays and four-season action plan:

Every spring, flower displays are planted in planters along Ridge Road and Calumet Avenue and in the gateway “Welcome to Munster” signs. The displays are planted, watered, and maintained by the Public Works Department. The flowers are two seasons with traditional summer flowers and we recently added red and red/white tulips representing our Town pride in the spring. In the fall, Public Works clears the displays and replants with the tulip bulbs.

Private entities in our Town, including the Community Hospital and Franciscan Health, use the philosophy of keeping color going. Spring brings pansies and daffodils; summer is petunias and begonias; fall sees the return of pansies, traditional mums, and kale and winter focuses on evergreen boughs, birch boughs, and red twig dogwood.

FL.a.02 - Program to encourage pollinator habitats:

The parkways along south White Oak Avenue from Somerset to Poplar was recently replanted with bee and butterfly friendly lilacs, dogwoods, and others. The Munster Garden Club provides educational opportunities including presentations from the Lake Shore Beekeepers Association.

FL.b.02 - Recognition program(s) for business and/ or residences:

The Munster Chamber of Commerce has an annual Beautification award for their members. The Beautification award is presented to those who make extraordinary efforts to improve and beautify their property. Past winners have been the Woodside Terrace at the Center for Visual and Performing Arts, the Fireman’s Tribute at Community Park, and the Franciscan Health Munster Healing Garden.

FL.b.03 – Demonstration/display garden(s):

Centennial Park boasts two formal gardens adjacent to one another. The gardens are arranged with beautiful floral settings which include roses, ornamental grasses, flowering shrubs, perennials, and annuals and are landscaped with stone outcroppings. Each garden has an entrance arbor with a shade pergola and is enclosed with a white picket fence. The gardens are an ideal place to relax, read a book, or take family and wedding photographs.

FL.b.04 - Community communication efforts about selection and care of flowers: NA

FL.d.04 - Plant health and display strategies: NA

FL.e.01 - Volunteer donations and/or participation:

The Town recently partnered with the Munster Civic Foundation which has donated funding for the tulip planting throughout Town.

The School Town of Munster had to make serious budget cuts about ten years ago. Landscaping maintenance became one of the first cuts. Slowly the schools’ exteriors began to visually become overgrown. A concerned parent organized students and community members to help with the cleanup and beautification efforts. The group holds beautification days in the spring and in the fall at the most visual school locations and the administration building. They have pulled and replaced bushes, planted seasonal perennials, and done some easy-care landscaping. The school has been able to maintain the landscaping efforts. To help financially support the effort, the group has held kids clothing sales and hosts an annual wreath sale.

FL.e.02 - Civic groups, garden clubs, Master Gardeners, and /or school floral-related programs and efforts:

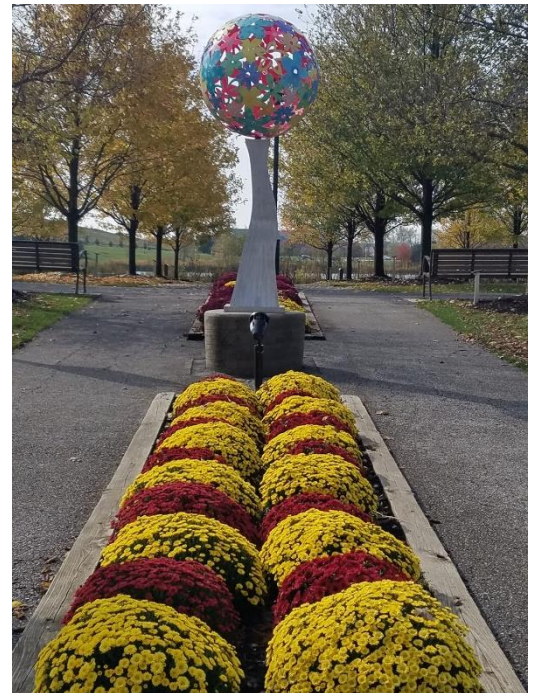
Munster Garden Club was founded in 1954 and federated in 1961. They are members of the National Garden Club, Central Region Garden Club, The Garden Club of Indiana, and the Northwest District Garden Club. The mission is to stimulate knowledge and love of gardening, native trees, wildflowers and birds in the community and the home.

The Munster Garden Club financially supports numerous educational projects. In the fall of 2017, they were thrilled to be able to see the culmination of five years of fundraising and planning when the sculpture “Flower Power” was installed at the formal gardens at Centennial Park.

The Wild Ones Gibson Woods chapter serves Lake, Porter, and La Porte counties in Indiana and Cook County in Illinois. Munster is home to a native plant garden featuring more than 100 species of native grasses, shrubs, and flowers. This garden has won a Bringing Nature Home Award from the Shirley Heinze Land Trust. They host a table at the Community Market promoting native plants in a home landscape. Presentations on the benefits of native plants are held. A garden walk features native plants in the home landscape. This is sponsored by a consortium of partners including Wild Ones, Purdue Extension, Shirley Heinze Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, and the Town of Munster. The purpose of the garden walk is to educate and lead by example promoting the use of native plants.



Freshly Planted Summer Flowers on Ridge Road



Centennial Park in the Fall

LANDSCAPED AREAS

LA.a.01 - Management of planting public landscaped areas:

The Town of Munster manages park and open space through parks maintenance staff, public works staff or via contracts with local landscape maintenance providers. Most of the specialty landscape bed maintenance is contracted out to landscaping professionals while the Town is responsible for the turf management of athletic fields and park greenspaces as well as floral displays and parkway plantings.

LA.a.02 - Municipal landscape ordinances:

The Munster Character-Based Code zoning ordinance includes specific landscaping requirements for each zoning district. In all mixed-use districts, building setbacks and parking lots are required to include a minimum level of landscaping including hedge screens and shade trees planted at specific intervals. New development is required to install street trees within the public frontage. All redevelopment that meets certain investment or modification thresholds must meet the code standards for parking lot landscaping.

LA.b.01 - Planning for restoration of natural areas and management of invasive plants:

The Town park development or redevelopment plans always consider any natural areas and tries to use them as focal points in the park. Dealing with invasive species is a challenge but is something done at retention ponds and at the former landfill site. In 2006, the Woodland Restoration Project was completed with a Lake Michigan Coastal Zone grant. The project set out to clear Bieker Woods, a 7-acre native oak savanna/woodland park of invasive, non-native, and aggressive vegetation such as mulberry, buckthorn, honeysuckle, and box elder. Because maples crowded out the oaks for so long, after this project, the results were many younger oaks growing alongside more mature maples.

LA.b.03 - Demonstration/display gardens:

Munster Parks Department maintains and cultivates the Centennial Park Formal Gardens. Two formal gardens are adjacent to one another on the east side of the park. The gardens are arranged with beautiful floral settings which include roses, ornamental grasses, flowering shrubs, perennials, and annuals and are landscaped with large rocks. Each garden has an entrance arbor with a shade pergola and is enclosed with a white picket fence. The gardens are an ideal place to relax, read a book, or take family and wedding photographs.

LA.b.04 - Communication of “Right Plant in the Right Place” and/or other plant issues:

The Town Arborist annually updates a list of acceptable trees for parkway plantings. The list is provided to residents and businesses to assist them in selecting the right tree for the right place, such as under utility lines and adjacent to heavily salted areas such as parking lots.

LA.b.05 - Recognition program for attractive landscapes:

The Munster Chamber of Commerce recognizes extraordinary efforts to beautify our Town. Past recipients include the Franciscan Healing Garden and the Cancer Resource Centre.



Franciscan Healing Garden



Cancer Resource Centre

LA.b.06 - School gardening programs:

The Munster Garden Club has partnered with Munster High School to promote gardening in education. The Garden Club donated \$1,000 to support a school STEM initiative called project GREEN, which is a 3–5-year interdisciplinary project engaging students with learning activities creating a school garden and orchard. They have two distinct garden spaces at the high school: the north courtyard houses a greenhouse with vegetables grown from seed and transferred into student built raised beds; the central courtyard will house a student designed and created orchard. Two of the three elementary schools have greenhouses attached to their science lab and integrate gardening into their curriculum.

LA.d.07 - Turf Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies and weed management:

With a small staff and limited expertise, the Town of Munster relies on turf experts when issues arise for pest and or weed management. These services are typically contracted out as needed to keep the level of service that park users expect in Munster. Athletic field areas are typically on a routine fertilization schedule annually along with the most heavily used parks to keep the fields at the level of service that is expected in Town. Public Works sprays for weeds twice a year within the Town Hall lawn and within the parkways along major corridors, pump stations, and other public open spaces.

LA.e.01 - Volunteer activities related to landscaped areas and turf:

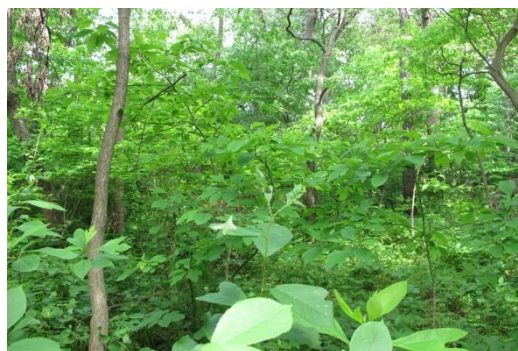
Each year to teach the local youth to help give back to their community, the Parks Department urges the local youth athletic programs to have a park clean-up day to help maintain their fields and parks to a safe and clean standard that they can all be proud of. These organizations include Munster Babe Ruth, Munster Girls Softball, Munster Lacrosse, Munster Little League, Munster Pop Warner, Munster Soccer Club and Midwest Wings Soccer Club.

LA.e.02 - Community educational programs related to Landscapes:

Occasionally the Munster Parks and Recreation department will offer a program for interested residents on basic gardening or interest areas as partnering with local volunteer master gardeners. A kid gardening program was the last event offered during the 2020 Community Market. The Munster Garden Club and the Wild Ones each offer programs throughout the year. Many of the topics have included bee pollination and habits, birds and native habitats, butterflies and native plants that sustain them, and tools for the garden.



Centennial Park in the Spring



Bieker Woods

URBAN FORESTRY

UF.a.01 - Identify personnel on staff or accessing trained individuals such as arborists and/or urban foresters:

Urban forestry is managed by the Munster Department of Public Works. Public Works retains Gina Darnell of Forest Resource Planning, a local professional forester that provides assistance with tree planning, grant management, and urban forest management. Public Works employees receive training for trimming trees.

UF.a.02 – Tree board/commission/department and activities:

The Department of Public Works (DPW) manages the urban forest in the Town. Staff monitors the health of street trees and removes them as necessary. Public Works annually seeks and obtains grants from the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission and the Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission to procure and plant trees within the public rights-of-way and the parks.

Public Works administers a 50/50 Residential Tree Replacement Program. The program will reimburse a resident 50% of the cost of the purchase and planting of up to two parkway trees per year up to \$125 per tree.

UF.a.03 - Municipal ordinance(s) enacted/enforced for tree preservation on public and/or private property and policy for ID and protection of historic trees:

The Munster zoning ordinance includes a tree preservation section that applies to all public and private development projects. All trees with a DBH (diameter breast height) greater than 10" are required to be replaced at a ratio that corresponds to the size of the tree. Developers can replace trees on- or off-site or pay a fee-in-lieu which is placed in a specific tree replacement fund that can be used to plant trees on public property.

UF.a.05 - Tree City USA community activities:

The Town has been a member of Tree City USA for 25 years and annually replaces dying or diseased trees and replants. The Town Council issues an Arbor Day Proclamation.

UF.b.01 - Tree inventory:

The Town does not have a tree inventory.

UF.b.02 – Annual tree planting program for public areas:

Public Works annually seeks and obtains grants from the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) and the Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission to procure and plant trees within the public rights-of-way and the parks. The electric utility NIPSCO provides trees to the Town to offset any trees they remove within their utility right-of-way.

UF.b.03 – Management strategies for tree health and removal of dead, imperiled, and invasive trees in public areas:

The Town of Munster monitors the health of all trees located in the parkway between the road and sidewalk. The health and appearance of these trees are closely tracked, and diseased or damaged trees are removed. If there is a tree in the parkway that needs to be removed, residents may submit a request through the PublicStuff app or call Public Works before contracting with a private company. Residents are responsible for the regular maintenance of parkway trees and branches must be kept a minimum of 6 ½ feet over any sidewalk. Pruning is done to remove limbs with failure potential, prevents decay, and can help balance or lighten tree structure.

UF.b.05 – Communication to residents of tree -related issues:

The Town Forester has prepared a list of acceptable trees for parkway plantings. The list is provided to residents and businesses to assist them in selecting the right tree for the right place, such as under utility lines and adjacent to heavily salted areas.

UF.e.02 - Community participation in Arbor Day or other tree-related activities:

The Town Council issues an Arbor Day Proclamation and conducts a ceremonial tree planting. The Munster Department of Parks and Recreation administers along with the Munster Civic Foundation the Living Memorial Tree Program. Anyone can purchase a tree and memorial plaque through Department. The memorial trees are planted and cared for in a park chosen by the applicant. Installations are completed by the Department during two sessions from 5/15-6/30 and 9/15-10/30. The Department assumes responsibility for maintenance of the tree and provides a one-year guarantee on all trees.

UF.e.03 - Volunteers assist in tree planting and/or care: NA



Elementary Students Plants Trees on School Grounds



Students Plant an Orchard at the High School

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS

EE.a.01 - Environmental Advisory Board(s) and/or Green Team(s):

The Town does not have an environmental advisory board or green team.

EE.a.02 - Electric/alternative fuel vehicle(s) used by municipality:

The Town does not use any electric or alternative fuel vehicles.

EE.a.03 - Electric vehicle charging station(s):

The Town has applied for grants through South Shore Clean Cities, a 501c(3) nonprofit organization funded by the US Department of Energy, to install an electric vehicle charging station at the Town Hall.

EE.a.04 – Stormwater management policies:

The Town requires new developments to retain stormwater onsite and to install water quality devices upstream of the public storm sewer. A stormwater fee is assessed to commercial and industrial businesses which is based on the amount of impermeable surface onsite.

EE.b.01 - Sustainability Action Plan: NA

EE.b.02 - Education about environmental efforts:

The Town has partnered with the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission on MS4 stormwater education.

EE.c.01 - Bio-swales and/or rain gardens to reduce stormwater run-off pollution in place:

The Town is completing the Calumet – Ridge Streetscape Plan. This plan includes recommendations for rain gardens within parkways and increased tree cover and impermeable surfaces to reduce stormwater runoff and improve water quality.

EE.c.03 - Effective and efficient waterwise irrigation in place: NA

EE.d.01 - Residential curbside trash collection and recycling is available and/or required:

Weekly residential curbside waste collection and bi-weekly recycling is provided throughout the Town by Homewood Disposal Services.

EE.d.04 – Yard waste composting:

The Town collects leaves and branches that are left curbside in residential areas. Fall leaf collection occurs between early October and early December. Leaves are collected approximately every two weeks. State law prohibits disposal of leaves in landfills, so they are disposed of at a regional composting site.

EE.d.05 - Prescription drug drop-off(s), hazardous waste, and plastic bag/foam container collection points:

The Town partners with the Lake County Solid Waste District to provide an annual household hazardous waste collection event at the public works garage and to collect household batteries. The Munster Police Department has a prescription medication drop-off collection box located in their station lobby, which is open 24-hours a day, 7 days a week and is monitored by audio and video surveillance. The police department also participates in regular “Drug Take Back Days” along with other area police departments to encourage residents to dispose of unused medication in a safe and proper manner.

EE.e.03 – School curricula programs and events to encourage youth involvement:

The Munster Garden Club has partnered with Munster High School to promote gardening in education. The Garden Club donated \$1,000 to support a school STEM initiative called project GREEN, which is a 3–5-year interdisciplinary project engaging students with learning activities creating a school garden and orchard. They have two distinct garden spaces at the high school: the north courtyard houses a greenhouse with vegetables grown from seed and transferred into student built raised beds; the central courtyard will house a student designed and created orchard. Two of the three elementary schools have greenhouses attached to their science lab and integrate gardening into their curriculum.



Medications Disposal in the Munster Police Department lobby



Lake County Solid Waste District Electronic Recycling located in a fenced in area outside of our Public Works Facility

CELEBRATING HERITAGE

CH.a.01 - Historic preservation ordinance(s):

The Town has adopted a zoning overlay district called the Ridge Preservation Area which prohibits the alteration of the grade of the historic sand ridge that runs along the south side of Ridge Road.

CH.a.03 - Historic Preservation and/or Architectural Review Board: NA

CH.a.04 - Historical Society activities:

The Historical Society activities include but are not limited to:

- General discussions and presentations followed by author book signing, when applicable
- Field Day offered to Second Grade Students at the Kaske House include historical presentation, tour of 1910 museum, artifact scavenger hunt (supervised by the board, members, teachers, aides, and parents) and a puzzle of museum.
- Girl Scout and Boy Scout participation at Heritage Park to achieve bronze, silver, gold awards and Eagle scout awards.
- Docent tours of the Kaske House.
- Concerts sponsored at Heritage Park by Peoples Bank (with Kaske House open for community to tour)
- Annual holiday open house and tour complimentary to the community at the 1910 Kaske House. Munster Junior Historical Society also participates.
- First responders and safety presentation by Munster Police Department in conjunction with Munster Historical Society and The Times.
- Displays – Historical displays at Munster Town Hall, Munster Library and 1910 Kaske House.
- Quilt of Valor presented to World War II docent by State Representative Pete Visklosky at the 1910 Kaske House
- Community Park “Players’ (circa 1950 – 1960’s) honored for their service to develop Munster Parks.
- Participated in Indiana Welcome Center displays including the Bicentennial Exhibit (showcasing Munster and Northwest Indiana’s history) via historic artifacts, photos, paintings, and maps etc.
- Center for Visual and Performing Arts – “Historical” Holiday Tree as a part of the WANISS – Women’s Association of Northwest Indiana Symphony Society display in 2020. Tours and Virtual.
- Ornaments to the Indiana State Museum, representing Lake County.
- Coordinated with Aurelio’s in Munster and provided photos (courtesy of the Munster Historical Society) to display in the newly remodeled restaurant interior with Munster historical themed murals
- Dedicated plaque to Moffit’s Barber Shop (September 2014 honoring the oldest, longest running business in the town of Munster, Indiana. The barbershop was founded by Martin Jabaay in 1927 this barbershop has been in continuous operation here for 94 years.
- Coordinating new laminated menus at Old Town Hall, Buttermilk Pancake House, to showcase photos courtesy of the Munster Historical Society
- Provide display booth at Frank H Hammond School for the 50th anniversary (1969) of the school
- Bicentennial Dinner at Centennial Park with President Benjamin Harrison (performed by Terry Lynch) and music performed by Munster High School String Ensemble. (Hoosier Hoopla)
- During Munster Mint Girl Scout Day camp, Munster Historical Society provided tour of 1910 Kaske House with artifacts, photos, displays, books, etc., of Girls Scout memorabilia on loan by historical society members.
- Participated, by invitation, of Munster Parks and Recreation input for short- and long-term parks and recreation goals with several Munster organizations, etc.
- Hosted Fetching market at Heritage Park
- Pumpkin patch in conjunction with St. Paul’s Episcopal Church.

- Munster Historical Society conducted “escape room” activity with Munster Mints Girl Scout Troop at 1910 Kaske House
- Provided display for Munster High School 50th anniversary weekend and tour of High School, etc.

CH.b.02 – National Register of Historic Places district and/or individual designations in place:

The Stallbohm Barn (circa 1890) and Kaske House circa (1910) were added to the National Register of Historical Places on April 1, 1998, by the United States Department of the Interior in cooperation with the Indiana Department of National Resources Division of Historical Preservation and Archeology.

On May 15, 2002, the historic Stallbohm Barn burned to the ground. The barns destruction was ruled arson by a state Fire Marshall Investigator.

CH.b.03 - Preservation of natural and/or agricultural areas:

Historical natural and agricultural areas include the 6.5 acre Bieker Woods (1968) which is adjacent to the Kaske House. In 1986, Mrs. Helen Kaske Bieker sold 11 acres of land, the house she was living in and the barn behind it, located on the southeast corner of Columbia Avenue and Ridge Road to the Munster Parks Department. In 1995, the property was named Heritage park in honor of its historical significance.

The Town has adopted a zoning overlay called the Ridge Preservation Area which prohibits the alteration of the grade of the historic sand ridge that runs along the south side of Ridge Road.

CH.b.04 – Preservation of documents and records, both oral and written, and artifacts:

Documents and records, including photos, are filed in the Munster Historical Society office located in Munster Town Hall. Artifacts are recorded, photographed, preserved, and protected by a curator and historical society board members. The Munster Historical Society organizes onsite visits and collaboration with Indiana Historical Society at the Kaske House/ Munster History Museum to exchange and share ideas. During the 2020 pandemic, virtual training sessions were provided by the I.H.S.

CH.b.05 - Education: historical publications/websites, interpretive signage, tours, museums, and programs in place:

In addition to the many programs listed in CH.a.04:

- Facebook: Munster Historical Society
- Website: munsterhistory.org
- Publications include:
 - Images of American, Munster, Indiana
 - Munster Indiana: A centennial History
 - The Brass Tavern Cookbook
 - Memories along the South Shore, Vol I, II, III
- Articles in:
 - Suburban Landmarks
 - Senior Life
 - Ridge Values
 - The Times
 - The Post-Tribune

CH.b.06 - Programs in place to encourage youth involvement:

- Field Day offered to Second Grade Students at the Kaske House include historical presentation, tour of 1910 museum, artifact scavenger hunt (supervised by the board, members, teachers, aides, and parents) and a puzzle of museum (with questions and answers regarding Munster History on the reverse side of the puzzle).
- Girl Scout and Boy Scout participation at Heritage Park to achieve bronze, silver, gold awards and Eagle scout awards including planting, weeding, and maintaining gardens and trails, informative kiosks, and signage at Heritage Park and Kaske House.
- Munster Junior Historical Society meetings, bridging ceremonies, and involved with annual open house during holidays. Scouts also participate in these activities to achieve National Honor Society hours while assisting during concerts, etc.

CH.c.03 - Cemeteries, monuments, and/or plaques:

- Kaske House (circa 1910) listed on National Register of Historical Places on April 1, 1998
- Signage – Friends of Shirley Heintz “Bringing Nature Home” Gold award project at Heritage Park Arbor Garden. This garden contains native plants to help support a healthy ecosystem.
- Plaques on the site of the Brass Tavern (dated 1857), which is the only one on the Chicago Trail through Lake County, Indiana. Tablet placed on house block from Brass Homestead by the Julia Watkins Brass Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution 1926 (Remounted on native boulder 1952)
- Kiosk/Plaques/Signage
 - Native Animals of Heritage Park and Bieler Woods, include photos and legend of Heritage Park and 1910 Kaske House.
- 1937 Aerometer Windmill installed in Heritage Park in April 2001 and dedicated August 2001
- 2007 Centennial Time Capsule burial sit., commemorating 100th anniversary by the Munster Junio Historical Society “Preserving History, Promoting Service, Building Character” (Time Capsule interred on July 4, 2008 to be exhumed on July 4, 2032, for our 125-year celebration) Funded by Munster Education Foundation.
- Heritage Park Flagpole donated by Munster Women’s Junior Club, July 2006
- Plaque of 1st Lt. Shaun M. Blue U.S. Marine Fallen Hero (Heritage Park Flagpole at base)
- Time capsule on the grounds of The Center for Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) placed on July 4, 1989, by the Munster Historical Society in conjunction with the Town of Munster. Scheduled to remain closed until 2076
- Town Hall obelisk
- Community works of art including Munster Historical Society mural at the Strack and Van Til grocery store located at 12 Ridge Road was prepared by the Munster Historical Society.

CH.c.05 - Parades, festivals, events, programs commemorating heritage:

- Participation in the Fourth of July parade.
- DAR meeting with Sally Hansen of the Julia Watkins Brass Chapter

CH.d.01 - Volunteer participation in community’s heritage activities:

- Volunteers in National Honor Society planting, weeding, and maintaining gardens and trails, information Kiosks, etc.

OVERALL IMPRESSION

Ol.a.01 - Signage ordinances:

The Town's zoning ordinance restricts the number, size, types of permanent and temporary business signs. The standards do not permit internally illuminated cabinet signage and encourage the use of high-quality, natural materials including wood, metal, and brick and stone, specifically for monuments.

Ol.a.02 - Ordinances in place to address blight issues:

The Town administers a Property Maintenance Code and an Unsafe Building Ordinance which empowers Town staff to enforce the maintenance of residential and commercial properties, the removal of trash and weeds, and to demolish unsafe or blighted structures.

Ol.a.03 - Code enforcement/compliance officer on municipal staff:

The Town employs two full time staff members that enforce the property maintenance code and zoning ordinance: a Zoning Enforcement Officer in the Community Development Department and a Code Enforcement Officer in the Police Department.

Ol.b.03 - Public restrooms available:

The Town of Munster has public restrooms available at during the outdoor season at Centennial Park and Community Park, the two largest parks in the system. Additional portable restroom units are provided during the outdoor season at the parks with higher traffic including those with athletic field uses.

Ol.b.04 - Community gateway entry features:

The Town maintains Town of Munster signs and planting areas at 45th Street at Highland border, 45th Street at State Line, Ridge at the State Line, Hohman Avenue at the Hammond border, Calumet at Main Street, Main Street at Highland border, Columbia Ave at the Little Calumet River, and Northcote at the Little Calumet River.

Ol.b.05 - Use of banners, murals, and/or public art:

The Town has historically required a percentage of any tax incentive to be used for public art, which has resulted in public art sculptures throughout the Town, and which can be viewed at an award-winning public art tour called 'Art on the Town'. The Town installs U.S. flags on light poles along Calumet Avenue during the summer months.

Ol.b.06 - Wayfinding signage:

The Town installs wayfinding for hospitals and churches. The Ridge Calumet Streetscaping Plan has recommendations for wayfinding signage to be installed throughout Ridge Road and Calumet Avenue.

Ol.b.07 – Use of non-plant seasonal decorations (lights, ornaments, etc.):

The Town of Munster seeks to uplift spirits in the community by decorating during the winter season at Centennial Park, the Munster Town Hall Municipal campus and along some of the main business corridors in Town. These include both lit and unlit decorations on buildings, light poles, trees, and facility landmark signs. The Munster Town Hall was a drive-thru Holiday decoration location in 2020 to help give the community an opportunity to see a light display without leaving their vehicle during the pandemic thanks in part to the Munster Civic Foundation.

Ol.c.06 – Street sweeping schedule:

The Town operates two street sweeper trucks and sweeps every street in Town four times a year.

Ol.d.01 - Volunteer participation and/or funding of community revitalization and improvement initiatives: NA

Ol.d.02 – Program or process for residents to fund public amenities such as memorial benches:

The Parks Department accepts donations for memorial benches and memorial trees.



Inspiration by Zachary Oxman



Iron Clan by John Kearney



Seasonal Cheer at Town Hall

COMMUNITY CONTACTS

Name	Affiliation/Title	Email	Cell phone
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Karen Mashura	Munster Chamber of Commerce	info@munbermunster.org	21-836-5549
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Officer James Ghrist	D.A.R.E./Crime Prevention Officer, Munster Police Department	jghrist@munster.org	219-836-6639
Carole Cornelison	Munster Historical Society	NO EMAIL	219-836-6530
Karl Ackermann	Wild Ones	Acks123@sbcglobe.net	708-790-1322
Rita Powell	Munster Garden Club	Ritapowell1@yahoo.com	
Jeff Elisha	Lakeshore Landscaping	jeff@lakeshorelandscaping.com	219-462-9555 X 1
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