



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

**Comprehensive Plan
For the Town of Munster, Indiana**

RFP Issued: December 7, 2021

Response Deadline: 4:00 PM CST

January 28, 2022

This document is posted on the Town of Munster website at www.munster.org.

Proposals shall be submitted to:

Town of Munster
Community Development Department
ATTN: Thomas Vander Woude
1005 Ridge Road
Munster, IN 46321

PURPOSE

The Town of Munster is seeking qualified planning firms to facilitate a community planning process and write a new Comprehensive Plan. It is anticipated that the plan will serve as a guiding document for the growth and development of the Town for a minimum of 10 years.

PROJECT GOALS

- Build a consensus-based vision for the future of Munster
- Generate goals and policies to support the consensus-based vision
- Give guidance to landowners and developers
- Establish a basis of fact for decisions
- Involve a broad array of interests in discussions about the future
- Build an informed constituency

BACKGROUND

Munster, Indiana is located in Lake County, Indiana, 30 miles southeast of the Chicago Loop. Since its incorporation in 1907, the Town of Munster has evolved into an established and prosperous community of 23,894 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 park and trails system. Commercial development is concentrated along the thoroughfares of Ridge Road, 45th Street, and Calumet Avenue.

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

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. 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 external factors. Most notably, the 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.

In addition to the items identified in the Scope of Work, some of the key issues to be addressed in the comprehensive plan are as follows:

Leveraging Transportation Investment

Local and regional transportation projects at various stages of completion are expected to have a transformative effect on Munster over the next 10 years. In 2021, the Town completed the 45th Street realignment and underpass, facilitating the ongoing construction of the Centennial Village development. The Town was recently awarded funding for the complete reconstruction of Main Street as a complete street from Columbia Avenue to the Town's eastern border, with preliminary engineering begun in 2021. The most significant project underway is construction of a new commuter rail line by the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD). A terminal station at Main Street will be constructed on a greenfield site at the south edge of the Town and a neighborhood-scale station will be built at Ridge Road and Manor Avenue. Service to downtown Chicago is planned to begin in 2025. The comprehensive plan should propose strategies to leverage these transportation projects to achieve Munster's consensus-based vision and to provide a framework for transit-oriented development around the commuter stations.

Mixed-use development

For the past decade, the Town has discussed ways that mixed-use and multi-family development can be used to enhance quality of life, establish a sense of place, and attract economic development. The 2010 Munster Comprehensive Plan called for "walkable, mixed-use centers" as the template for redevelopment. Since then, the Town has participated in multiple TOD planning activities related to the West Lake Corridor commuter rail extension. In keeping with those plans, and after a significant public engagement process, in 2019 the Town adopted a new zoning ordinance that rezoned all single-use commercial districts to mixed-use districts, permitting multifamily development by right in buildings with ground floor commercial uses. However, after expressing concern about the intensity of potential development and uncertainty about the capacity of town infrastructure, the Munster Town Council recently adopted a zoning amendment designating multifamily uses a conditional use in these districts. Their intent is to revisit the zoning based upon the recommendations of the comprehensive plan.

Corridor Redevelopment

The Calumet corridor has undergone considerable redevelopment in recent years. The corridor north of Ridge Road has attracted strip retail driven largely by the high traffic counts and proximity to I-80/94. The Town has been challenged in this area to promote walkability and sense of place in a high-traffic corridor lined by small, shallow lots. South of Fisher Street, Calumet Avenue has been transforming from an industrial and warehousing district to an office and mixed-use corridor. This area is anchored by two regional hospitals, the Community Hospital located at Fisher Street and Calumet Avenue and Franciscan Health Munster located at Superior Avenue and Calumet Avenue. Together these two institutions have spurred a cluster of medical uses that continues to grow along Calumet. Three public-private partnerships, the Lake Business Center, Centennial Village, and Maple Leaf Crossing, have spurred the redevelopment of large brownfields. A task of the comprehensive plan will be to understand the interaction between these uses and the remaining light industrial areas and to tie these together as a cohesive whole.

Ridge Road has been identified in previous planning activities as the location for "downtown" Munster, though redevelopment has been slow to take place. The Town expects that the Ridge and Manor Avenue commuter station will provide a catalyst for this. The recently adopted Calumet-Ridge Streetscaping Plan recommends that Ridge Road be reduced from 5 lanes to 3 lanes to allow for on-street parking and wider sidewalks. The comprehensive plan should provide additional strategies and best practices for the orderly development of the Ridge Road corridor.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS FOR REVIEW

2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan

https://www.munster.org/egov/documents/1555354130_57531.pdf

2021 Calumet-Ridge Streetscaping Plan

<https://www.munster.org/egov/apps/document/center.egov?view=item&id=5402>
www.munster-streetscape.org

Munster Zoning Ordinance

<https://www.munster.org/departments/division.php?structureid=85>

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Vision, Principles:
Drawing on public and stakeholder input, articulate a vision for the Town of Munster as an organizing principle for future growth and change. Develop principles for the required plan elements.
2. Existing Conditions and Current Plan Review:
 - a. Provide a comprehensive description and analysis of existing conditions, including the physical, economic, demographic, and social factors that will drive or constrain the development of the community. The community assessment should provide comparisons to similar communities to serve as benchmarks for the Town.
 - b. Review existing planning documents, noting the status of implementation, and identify projects and policies for consideration in the new plan.
3. Community Education:
 - a. Provide information to residents, businesses, and policy makers on the meaning and role of the Comprehensive Plan.
 - b. Develop and maintain a plan website.
4. Public Engagement:
 - a. Lead an extensive and creative engagement process with residents, businesses, and policy makers.
 - b. Plan and execute regular meetings with the ad hoc Advisory Committee.
5. Plan Elements:
Address the following plan elements, either as individual chapters or integrated into an alternative structure, each with a clear set of policies and projects to guide decision making.
 - a. Land Use
 - i. Produce a future land use map.
 - ii. Provide recommendations for the location, scale, and design of mixed-use development and multi-family development, e.g., residential density, height based on realistic growth forecasts.
 - iii. Provide specific recommendations for the development of the future commuter rail station areas.
 - iv. Recommend redevelopment and preservation strategies for enhancing older commercial areas.
 - v. Evaluate the role of light industrial land uses.
 - vi. Establish character-based categories for commercial and mixed-use districts and corridors.
 - vii. Develop urban design and placemaking strategies appropriate to character-based land use categories.
 - b. Transportation
 - i. Establish character-based typologies for the Town's street network using a complete streets framework.
 - ii. Produce a thoroughfare plan based on character-based typologies.

- iii. Provide recommendations for an on- and off-street pedestrian pathways system.
 - iv. Identify gaps in the multimodal transportation network and propose strategies and projects to improve connectivity.
 - v. Propose strategies to improve safety and calm traffic along major thoroughfares.
 - c. Housing
 - i. Provide recommendations for the integration of diverse housing types into the community.
 - ii. Include strategies for maintaining the quality of mature residential neighborhoods.
 - d. Community Facilities and Infrastructure
 - i. Review condition and capacity of transportation network, stormwater, and sanitary sewer infrastructure.
 - ii. Inventory and assess adequacy of existing municipal facilities including Town Hall, Fire Stations, Police Station, and Public Works.
 - e. Parks and Open Space
 - i. Inventory existing parks by type.
 - ii. Provide recommendations for a town-wide green infrastructure network linking parks, natural areas, and multi-use trails.
 - f. Economic Development
 - i. Conduct a market study.
 - 1. Review and analyze market conditions and economic forecasts.
 - 2. Determine demand and supply of industry types and discuss gaps and opportunities.
 - ii. Review tax revenue implications of different development types.
 - iii. Evaluate regulatory structure and suggest changes to attract and retain desired business types.
 - iv. Recommend programs for the retention and attraction of desired business types.
 - g. Arts and Culture
6. Concept Plans:
Develop conceptual plans to test development concepts for areas to be identified during the planning process.
7. Implementation Plan:
- a. Develop an implementation plan that coordinates decision making across Town departments and between the public and private sector.
 - b. Include capital projects, regulatory changes, and new or revised programs or procedures to be implemented over a ten-year period.
 - c. Identify funding sources and responsible parties for implementation measures.
8. Documentation:
- a. Provide graphically rich, user-friendly documents that can be printed and viewed online.
 - b. Final documents shall be provided electronically to the Town in an editable format.

ANTICIPATED DELIVERABLES

- Public Outreach Plan
- Project Management Plan
- Presentation materials for all public, committee, Plan Commission, and Town Council meetings
- Project website
- Reports of each public engagement activity
- Existing Conditions report

- Draft Plan
- Final Plan

The consultant shall provide 20 bound copies, a pdf, and an editable file of the final plan.

BUDGET

The proposed budget for the project shall not exceed \$150,000.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The primary Town of Munster staff involved in the project will be the Planning Director and the Town Manager. The Planning Director will serve as the project manager and primary contact. The project will be guided by an ad hoc Advisory Committee.

The consultant will work under the direction of the Planning Director and the Advisory Committee. The consultant shall designate a project manager to serve as the primary point of contact for the duration of the project. The consultant shall develop and maintain a project management plan that includes regular communication with Town staff. The Consultant shall be responsible for planning and executing all public meetings and other forms of public engagement.

All documents will be reviewed by the Planning Director and/or staff prior to release.

In accordance with Indiana State Code Section 36-7-4-500, the consultant shall present the Comprehensive Plan to the Town of Munster Plan Commission for approval and to the Town of Munster Town Council for adoption.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

- 1. Cover Letter** – A cover letter introducing the firm(s), including the name of the firm(s) and the name and telephone numbers of the person(s) authorized to represent the company regarding all matters related to the proposal.
- 2. Description of Approach** -- A summary of your firm(s)' project understanding, intended approach and methods, and community engagement efforts. The approach must be consistent with the Scope of Work listed in the RFP.
- 3. Project Experience** – The firm must have experience developing comprehensive plans for mature suburban communities.
 - a. A description of firm(s)' experience in comprehensive plans or other similar projects.
 - b. Provide links to or electronic copies of at least three plans.
 - c. Provide references for at least three projects.
- 4. Team Expertise** —The team should include members that represent the following disciplines: transportation planning, land use planning, urban design, economic development.
 - a. Brief description of general qualifications.
 - b. Specific evidence of relevant experience developing comprehensive plans for similar communities.

- c. Résumés of key personnel that may work with the Town. Resumes should list all relevant licenses and certifications.
- 5. **Schedule** -- Overview of timeline and important project milestones to ensure project delivery on time.
- 6. **Project Costs** – An outline of your professional fees for completing the work as described. Provide an estimate of projected hours and costs for each task. Include hourly rates for each member of the team.

SUBMITTAL PROCEDURES

Submittals must be received by the Town of Munster by no later than 4:00 p.m. (CST) on January 28, 2022.

Consultants must submit three (3) identical paper copies and one (1) electronic copy of their submittal package. Electronic copies may be submitted either as a saved document on a USB flash drive with the paper copies or via an email received prior to the deadline. Hard copy submissions must be in a sealed package or envelope marked “Town of Munster Comprehensive Plan.” The consultant organization’s name and address shall appear in the upper left corner of the package. Documents submitted via email must include in the subject line the consultant organization’s name and “Town of Munster Comprehensive Plan.”

Submissions must be delivered to Town Hall at the following address:

**Town of Munster
Community Development Department
ATTN: Thomas Vander Woude
1005 Ridge Road
Munster, IN 46321**

Emailed submissions must be sent to:

tvanderwoude@munster.org

There will be no public opening for this RFP. Late submissions will be rejected and returned unopened. Respondents are responsible for ensuring that their submittals are received by the Town before the deadline. The Town reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.

Questions

General questions may be sent via email to Thomas Vander Woude at tvanderwoude@munster.org.

ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to change.

Release RFP..... December 7, 2021
 Responses Due..... January 28, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.
 Interviews (if necessary) Beginning February 7, 2022

EVALUATION OF SUBMITTALS

Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee that includes staff, Plan Commission members, and Town Council members.

Proposals will be evaluated based upon the following:

- The quality and similarity of project experience.
- The qualifications (including education, training, licenses, experience and past performance) of team members.
- Understanding of the work to be completed based upon the clarity of the proposal. The Town will not assume that a responding firm will perform services not specifically detailed in its submitted proposal.
- Quality, clarity, completeness, and responsiveness of proposal.
- Ability to complete the plan in a timely manner.
- Anticipated value.
- References.
- Ability to negotiate and execute a contract in a timely manner.

The Town of Munster will evaluate all submittals to determine which consultants have the experience and qualifications that are most suited for these services. The Town of Munster may request personal interviews with the highest-ranked consultants.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. The Town of Munster reserves the right to reject any and all responses and to waive minor irregularities in any response to the RFP.
2. The Town of Munster reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted and to request additional information from any firm submitting a response to the RFP.
3. The Town of Munster shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by any firm in preparing, submitted or presenting its response to the RFP.
4. By submitting a response, the responding firm acknowledges the proposal and all materials submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of the Town.