

MARSHALL COUNTY CROSSROADS

Great Hometowns: One Vision

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Plymouth Develops a Community-Led Tactical Urbanism Project

Marshall County, IN. – Beginning October 2 and lasting until the end of the month, a portion of Jefferson Street in Plymouth will be the site of Marshall County’s first tactical urbanism project. Tactical urbanism empowers a community to re-vision and rebuild infrastructure. The street transforms to reflect the needs and values of the community in a non-permanent way, allowing community members to experience proposed changes to the streetscape before they are finalized.

“It’s another great day in Plymouth,” said Mark Senter, Mayor of Plymouth. “The tactical urbanism approach invites participation from all community members. Plymouth’s residents have provided input on the design, and we are excited to build our vision for a safer Jefferson Street.”

How did we get here? In September of 2016, City of Plymouth staff, elected officials, regional bike and pedestrian advocacy groups, local business owners, Plymouth Community School Corporation staff, and community members participated in an Active Living Workshop, facilitated by the Indiana State Department of Health, Purdue Extension, and Health by Design.

Workshop participants identified the Jefferson Street corridor as a good candidate for a tactical urbanism project due to community interest in increasing bike, pedestrian, and student access and safety between Lincoln Junior High, Riverside Intermediate, and Plymouth High School – all of which see heavy student traffic on Jefferson Street before and after school. Since that time, the opening of the Marshall County Boys & Girls Club and extension of the Greenways trail to Downtown Plymouth have increased already high levels of student, pedestrian, and bike traffic on Jefferson Street.

Building on the work of the Active Living Workshop, in November of 2018, the Plymouth City Council unanimously adopted a Complete Streets policy, requiring the City maintain a transportation network that allows users of all ages and abilities to travel safely and independently, including pedestrians, bike riders, and wheelchair users. A Complete Streets approach integrates people and place in the City’s planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of transportation networks. This helps to ensure streets put safety over speed,

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balance the needs of different modes, and support local land uses, businesses, and natural environments.

In June of this year, the Marshall County Crossroads Health and Wellness Committee facilitated a Blue Zones Built Environment visit by Mark Fenton, a nationally recognized expert in public health, planning, and transportation. The Built Environment visit was designed to expand Plymouth's familiarity and comfort with planning and executing collaborative demonstration, pilot, and interim streetscape design projects and tactical urbanism. The resulting walk audit again identified Jefferson Street as a priority.

"Our goal is to support Safe Routes to School for all of Plymouth's students. Jefferson Street is the logical place to start," said Allie Shook, Marshall County Crossroads Trails and Transportation Committee Chair and Complete Streets member. "Slower traffic will encourage more residents to use the Greenways Trails, and hopefully make their way Downtown to support local businesses and enjoy the latest events at River Park Square."

A new Jefferson Street crosswalk, bump-outs, ramp access, and delineators will be in place for the month of October to help calm traffic too often speeding past local students walking home from school, or families crossing Jefferson Street to use the Greenways Trail or visit local businesses. With a shorter crossing distance and calmer traffic, pedestrians can feel more comfortable making their way along the corridor to school, home, or a place of business.

"We love the new crosswalk," said Tecia Timmel to volunteers as they were finishing setting up the project. "We enjoy taking our dog Franky for walks to River Park Square. With the shorter crossing distance and slower traffic, I already feel safer. Thank you!"

The Jefferson Street project is part of larger potential Plymouth Complete Streets and Blue Zones corridor plans to link the Greenways Trail with Plymouth's Downtown, River Park Square, schools, and area neighborhoods, prioritizing the safety of users of all ages and abilities and easy access to local businesses, restaurants, and attractions.



About Marshall County Crossroads

Marshall County Crossroads is a collaboration of leaders from across the region that engages with and inspires our communities to connect, collaborate, and create high-quality hometowns. This will be done by creating healthy, livable, thriving, and sustainable communities that provide current and future residents of all ages, races, and genders the best hometowns in the Midwest to live, work and play. www.MarshallCountyCrossroads.com. Social Media Handle: @GreatHometowns