

## Preface

By Dan Shenk, Lee Roy Berry Jr. and Allan Kauffman

In September 2013 Goshen resident Dan Shenk began researching Goshen as a “sundown town.” In late January 2014, after publishing three writeups of his findings, Dan consulted then-Goshen Mayor Allan Kauffman about a City statement. Kauffman recommended approaching the Goshen Ministerial Association (GMA) and Community Relations Commission (CRC).

Shenk enlisted Lee Roy Berry Jr. to make joint presentations in November 2014 to the GMA and CRC, then to the Goshen City Council in March 2015. With unanimous support from the GMA and CRC, the Goshen City Council unanimously passed A RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING THE RACIALLY EXCLUSIONARY PAST OF GOSHEN, INDIANA, AS A ‘SUNDOWN TOWN.’

Soon after the council passed the resolution, Kauffman suggested that a marker or sign might be installed in Goshen, but he was in his last year in office. The marker was not installed.

In April 2019 Shenk revived Kauffman’s suggestion. Together Kauffman and Shenk met with Mayor Jeremy Stutsman about the idea of a historical marker.

In November 2019 Kauffman, Berry and Shenk met with Goshen Historical Society (GHS) leaders Ron Hoke, Earlene Nofziger and John Hertzler. They seemed intrigued but weren’t able to commit society backing. The group of six thought it advisable to report back to Jeremy and check with the CRC about having this matter on its agenda. Allan and Jeremy both agreed that vetting the marker idea and proposed text with the CRC would be a good next step.

On March 10, 2020, Lee Roy, Allan and Dan made an in-person presentation to the CRC. They heard support around the circle for the idea of a marker; several CRC members mentioned the importance of an even stronger focus on the future. A few text changes were then made to that effect.

A day after the March 2020 meeting, the World Health Organization declared a pandemic caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2. Work on the marker stalled until Kauffman, Berry and Shenk attended a GMA meeting in November. There they also received support and helpful feedback from GMA members.

In addition, the *Goshen News* had a reporter at the GMA meeting, and featured a front-page story on November 21, 2020, about the marker.

Berry, Kauffman and Shenk were invited back to CRC meetings in March and June 2021—and all three participated on both occasions, interacting with CRC members and answering questions from them and a few folks from the public. Allan, Lee Roy and Dan also heard some CRC members suggesting in June the importance of getting more public input about the marker idea and text before making a recommendation to Mayor Stutsman.

Quoting Berry in closing: “We need to tell these stories.” Why? For the benefit of the community today and for future generations.

# Sundown Town Marker public survey summary

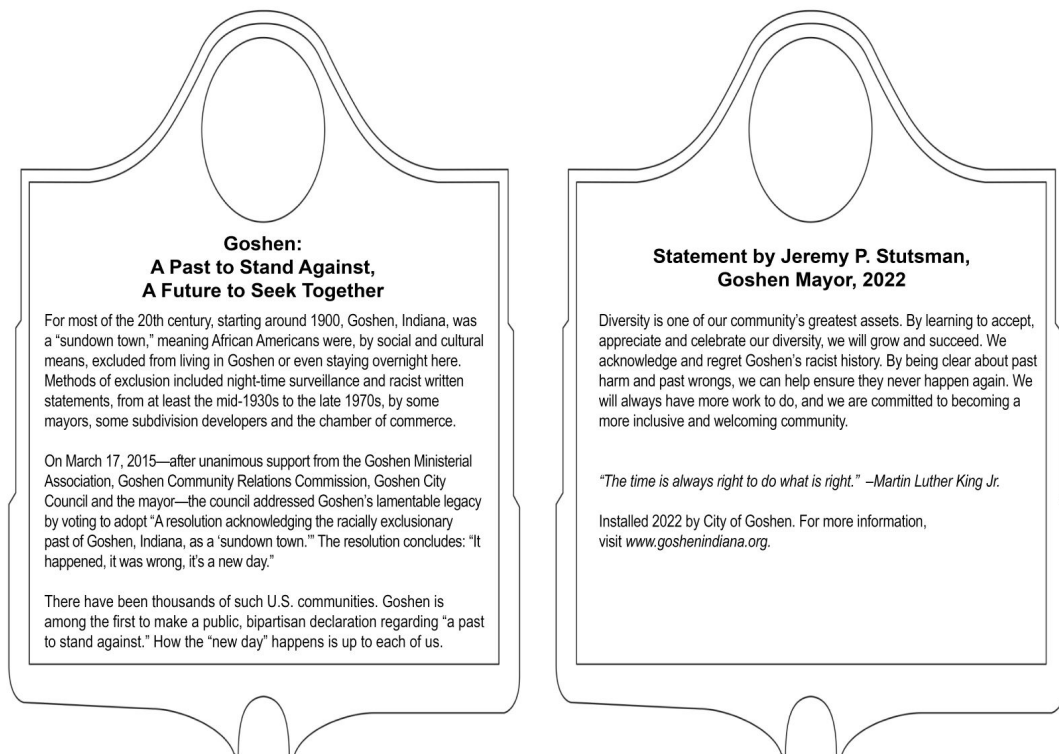
By AJ Delgadillo

In response to the request for the CRC to vet 1) the idea and 2) the text, the matter was brought up at several CRC meetings. Each time it was brought up, commissioners named significant merit and hesitation. A subcommittee met and decided to design a process to take public opinion—administering a paper and virtual survey and following up with a public opinion meeting to capture more qualitative information.

## Methods

This survey received 608 responses. Demographic data for race, ethnicity, gender and sexual diversity, and age were collected. Each demographic question included a “prefer not to answer” option. The survey included narrative information about why a marker is being proposed and the text being proposed at the time of circulation. There were 3 questions posed: 1) “Should some kind of marker exist?” 2) “do you approve of this text?” and 3) “would a marker change your opinion about working or living in Goshen?” Each question included a space to answer “why or why not?” and there was a fourth space to include any other comments.

In the “why or why not” section of each question, respondents often repeated themes. Comments were counted by theme. Some comments were related to neither other comments nor the question, those questions were not coded. Some comments included two prominent themes and were counted for both categories.



## Question 1

Do you approve of such a marker?

This question had the largest margin with 517 respondents saying “yes” (85%) and 91 “nos” (15%), a 60-point difference. When this question is considered along with demographic information, every racial demographic has more “yes” responses than “no” responses. Every age group has more “yes” responses than “no” responses, and—notably—there are 0 “no” responses in the under 18 category. 6 responded “no” who marked themselves as 18-30. Of those under 30, 83 (93.3%) responded “yes” while only 6 (6.7%) responded “no.”

The only one racial category, “prefer not to say” marked more “no” responses than “yes” responses. 2 “yes” (18%) responses to 9 “no” (81%) responses.

### Comments

69 comments mentioned themes of transitional justice. These are comments that emphasize “Apology”, “Healing”, and “Welcoming.”

43 comments were about the marker standing as an example of what not to repeat.

40 comments said erecting this marker is the honest thing to do.

28 comments were about the marker helping the community aspire to a better future.

20 comments said erecting a marker is the right thing to do.

17 comments said this will cause division in the community.

14 comments were about timing:

- 6 comments said it is time.
- 5 comments said now is not the time.
- 3 comments said to let the past die.

13 comments said there is no point.

11 comments were about factual concerns:

- 9 asked for sources or for sources to be readily available.
- 2 challenged the truth of Goshen’s past as a Sundown Town.

9 comments say this is a waste of time and/or money.

Additionally: One comment asked about the racist history of the police booth. Another asked “who are we trying to please.” Another says that this is the way to have the freedom to pursue a new future and to build credibility in our attempt to build that future.

7 comments said the value of this marker is emotional:

- 4 said this is for self-congratulation.
- 2 said this is virtue signaling.
- 1 comment said this is for self-flagellation.

7 comments were about city marketing:

- 6 comments said this is bad marketing for the city.
- 1 comment said this could bring tourism.

6 comments asked if we will erect a sign for all past transgressions.

5 comments said that this sends the message that hate will not be tolerated.

4 comments said this ignores the progress we’ve made

3 comments questioned the progress we’ve made

3 comments said that this marker should include progress made since then

2 comments noted the current absence of black people in Goshen

2 comments asked where is the accompanying action

## Question 2

Do you approve of the proposed text

This question had a smaller margin than Question 1 with 485 (79.8%) responses saying “yes” to approving the proposed text to 123 (20.2%) responses saying “no.” While this is still a significant lead, 59.6 points, there is less energy for this specific text than there is for a marker of some kind.

Notable demographic trends include: 1) of the responses marked as “black,” 40% approve of this specific text as opposed to 60% marked as ‘no.’ The proposed text does not have the approval of a majority of black respondents. 2) Two demographic categories, “black” and “prefer not to say,” marked more “no” responses than ‘yes’ responses.

### Comments

9 comments were about limitations of the phrase “methods of exclusion”:

- 5 comments asked who is at fault, and noted that unnamed methods lead to ambiguity.
- 2 comments said that this is a defamatory attack.
- 1 comment asked if there were a variety of methods, why only name a few and blame a few people for the exclusion and apathy of a community.
- 1 comment asked to be more descriptive of past wrongs.

7 comments were about the emotional value of the text:

- 6 comments said that the proposed text is self-congratulatory for Mayor Stutsman, the GMA, and the City Council of ‘14. One comment pointed out that this is inappropriate as the Republicans of this council whittled the resolution down and erased any public apology.
- 1 comment said this self-flagellation

7 comments suggested variations on the last line:

- 3 comments suggested using the word ‘legacy,’ as in ‘the legacy of the past remains’
- 2 comments suggested “However the shadow of the past remains, the extent

to which the ‘new day’ is realized is up to us as a community”

- 1 comment suggested some use of the word ‘wake’
- 1 comment suggested changing this from a declarative to an imperative.

6 comments were about factual concerns:

- 3 asked for sources
- 3 challenged the truth of the text

5 comments said this can help us aspire to be better

5 comments said this text is divisive

4 comments asked ‘where is the accompanying action?’

4 comments noted that in the subtitle “A Past to Stand Against” is really broad, as if it is against all of Goshen’s past. These comments preferred “practice” as a way to point out that this is a specific practice to stand against.

4 comments called this wasteful:

- 3 comments called this a waste of money, or say more racial justice progress could come from funding other programming
- 1 comment called this a waste of time

4 comments were about transitional justice themes:

- 2 comments said this is an apology
- 2 comments said this is a healing gesture

4 comments said the text on the front side does not make its case:

- 2 comments said the thesis is not clear
- 1 comment said the rationale is not clear
- 1 comment said the text vague in general

3 comments suggested to name community involvement in the “methods of exclusion.”

3 comments suggested words like “enduring,” “wake,” and “lasting harm.”

3 comments said this text does not accomplish its goal.

2 comments said this needs to include an apology; that this is just an acknowledgement.

2 comments challenged its value:

- 1 comment said there is no point
- 1 comment said it isn't necessary

2 comments were about the timing:

- 1 comment said to let the past die
- 1 comment said now is not the time to put up a marker

2 comments noted the reading level of the text:

- 1 comment said its at an appropriate level
- 1 comment said to simplify the text

1 comment asked about the date range—what is their evidence for, what are the exact years, are those exact years in contradiction with the simplified “late 1970s”?

1 comment would like a specification about *what* ended in the 1970s?

1 comment said the city's past is a ‘product of its time.’

1 comment said the text reads like all is now good and implies racism is over without the mayor's accompanying text.

1 comment said this is a reminder not to repeat the past.

1 comment called this the right thing to do.

1 comment called this the honest thing to do.

1 comment said this ignores the progress the city has made.

1 comment said this is a part of the racial progress that gives them a sense of pride to live in Goshen.

1 comment said this is unnecessary because racism is over.

1 comment challenged the use of “we” in the text.

1 comment said the first sentence is too long

1 comment said to cut the resolution text. “For the most part I approve of the text. The mayor's statement is powerful. However the resolution text, ‘It happened, it was wrong, it's a new day.’ —I find this last line flippant as a resolution.

Don't include it. It says to me that some white people wrote it and had to tack on that ‘a new day’ bit to make each other feel better.”

Additionally: it was noted that the MLK quote used is overused; it is watered down and vague. One comment asked if a statement could be added in affirmation of Black Lives Matter. One comment said they preferred the back side. One comment said they'd prefer direct encouragement instead of “we are committed to change.” One comment asked for the resolution text to go before the history. One comment asked about Latino businesses ripping off Latinos.

One comment reads:

*Yes ish [sic]. Just keep it more positive. Starting off with wording such as “A Past To Stand Against” can make people feel as if our ancestors, while flawed, were evil. I think this is important and I'm glad we are going to do this, but respect the fact that our ancestors were a product of their time. I don't think historical figures were necessarily evil and none of us would know how we would have reacted in the same*

*circumstances. I'm sure many in this community would have supported and stood by the sundown philosophy of the past had we been alive at that time, as unfair, evil, and demeaning to black peoples [sic] humanity as that policy was. I think the resentment of looking at the past with a critical eye by some is really a reaction to looking at our ancestors as evil when our society and foundations of our community were built by them. We want to look at our ancestors with respect and feel proud of our roots. It's natural. On the flip side, they disrespected people just based on their skin color. This can't be denied and should be talked about, but with context. If we focus on those folks as bad or evil we miss the bigger picture lessons that we can teach people about the context and attitudes behind those practices and beliefs that led to those policies. If we teach how to recognize the signs within our own society \*cough\* proud boys \*cough\* and how those ideologies can lead to equally disparate and disastrous outcomes, we do ourselves a disservice. Regardless of language used this is important and I hope it happens and I approve it as is.*

Another reads:

*Instead of a statement from the mayor, I would like to see a statement from a coalition of multiracial leaders. The statement itself is good, but I don't think the mayor should get sole credit for it. I imagine that so much work has gone on behind the scenes to make this happen and many people - including people of color - have offered their time and energy, so I think a more diverse group of people than just the mayor should be credited with this statement celebrating diversity and calling for continued anti-racism work.*

Another reads:

*I would directly quote the entirety of the last portion of the resolution on the sign: Acknowledge the racist and exclusionary aspects of Goshen's "sundown town" history, along with the pain and suffering that these practices caused; Resolve to follow the example and counsel of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by examining our own hearts today, then seeking to eliminate from our thoughts, words, and actions all racism, prejudice, and discrimination—replacing those negative characteristics with the positive attributes of acceptance, harmony, and a spirit of cooperation; Commit to being an uncommonly great community through our advocacy for equality and justice for all; Pledge to work toward the common good in building a community where people of all races and cultural backgrounds are welcome to live and prosper; And summarize this resolution in nine words: It happened, it was wrong, it's a new day.*

## Question 3

Would it change your opinion about working or living in Goshen?

This question served to give some context to the previous two questions. While people may be for or against this marker, not everyone will give it the same gravity or attention. 285 of 608 respondents (46.9%) said that this would change their opinion about working or living in Goshen. Of respondents who were against the marker, 42 of 91 (46.2%) said that their opinion would change, and of respondents who were for the marker, 243 of 517 (47%) said their opinion would change about Goshen if a marker went up. These numbers are less straightforward as some comments name that the specific text would change how or how strongly they feel about a marker. As backlash is a concern for the marker it is important to anticipate what kind of negative reception this might receive. 42 out of 608 (6.9%) respondents marked “no” for Question 1 and “yes” to Question 3, indicating that they are both against a marker and would change their mind about Goshen.

### Comments

47 comments said that a marker would make them more proud of Goshen:

- 31 would be proud of Goshen’s commitment to racial justice.
- 10 would be proud of Goshen’s growth.
- 5 would be proud of Goshen’s diversity and ethnic celebrations.
- 1 would be proud to see the youth working on this.

46 comments said that they would have more respect for the City of Goshen.

45 comments said they were glad for this marker:

- 26 comments said they are glad to know that Goshen regrets this and wants to heal.
- 19 comments said they are glad to know that Goshen is not trying to bury this truth.

18 comments said this as way to build racial justice:

- 15 comments said this is a good way to align thoughts and actions.
- 2 comments said this will help stop racism.
- 1 comment said this will help build equity.

18 comments said they are glad to have the message in public:

- 14 comments said it is good marketing for the City of Goshen.
- 2 comments said this is a good example.
- 2 comments said this will be helpful for educating the youth.

14 comments were about action:

- 6 comments asked where the accompanying action is.
- 4 comments said Goshen will be the same with or without a sign.
- 2 comments said Goshen will still be racist.
- 1 comment said this is just words.
- 1 comment asked what the police are doing.

8 comments were about frustrations neither based in Goshen’s history as a sundown town nor based in the proposed text:

- 3 comments requested to move on.
- 3 comments were against critical race theory, gender and sexual diversity, or socialism.
- 2 comments were about white shame.

5 comments said their opinion of the city would worsen if the city backed out because of a small minority of dissenters.

4 comments said the marker is a sign of progress.

3 comments said a marker will make bigoted people not want to live here.  
2 comments said that the respondent will feel fear, shame, and embarrassment (for the current leaders).  
1 comment said there is no need.  
Additionally, one comment reads:

1 comment said this is bad advertising.  
1 comment said this can help heal people who lived through Goshen's exclusive history.  
1 comment said that a public statement like this will make the respondent want to stay in Goshen despite the rising cost of living.

*"I'm proud that our leaders know that to move us to the future, diversity is a plus. There is no reason to fear this if you have a sense of self worth."*

Another:

*"I was born and raised in Goshen and don't want see it [sic] image tarnished by a bunch of lies."*

Another:

*"It makes me want to stay in Goshen. The cost of living is getting higher, property is expensive. Knowing something like this is up, it will make me want to stay."*

Another:

*"Right now, especially at school board meetings, I feel there is a very loud, ugly minority speaking hate guised as concern. It is important to know that is not where we are overall as a community. As I bicultural, biracial family, hearing people speak out saying "racism doesn't exist, it's just a bunch of young black criminals not doing what police tell them to do" is very painful."*

Another:

*"Historical markers are interesting, but they are easily forgettable and generally looked at more by passersby than residents. I don't see how they have any impact on daily life."*

Another:

*"I feel that you are only appealing to one culture and I refuse to be included in a past I had absolutely no part in."*

Another:

*"I would plan on leaving. It is a direct attack on white people and those that did this are no longer here."*

Another:

*"Goshen has chosen a path to the future."*



## Question 4

### Additional comments

27 comments were about question 1.

- 23 comments reaffirmed the marker.
- 4 comments reaffirmed not wanting the marker.

20 comments were about gratitude:

- 19 comments were general appreciation and “thank yous.”
- 1 comment was grateful to Don Brown (former CRC Chair) for his work in this.

13 comments were about community cohesion:

- 4 comments said this will cause division.
- 3 comments said this will help us move into the future.
- 3 comments said leaders should not be dissuaded by an angry minority.
- 2 comments said to stop apologizing.
- 1 comment said this does not promote Goshen.
- 1 comment said this is the pathway to community.

8 comments were about concerns from outside of the Goshen’s history as a sundown town and outside of the proposed marker:

- 2 comments asked for city action on the hateful signs across from the library.
- 1 comment asked “What about prostitution [sic], drugs, and homeless people downtown?”
- 1 comment asked “what about people who really need help?”
- 1 comment asked “what about low-income housing and a pathway to citizenship?”
- 1 comment asked “what about city department heads having poor customer service and the skating rink?”
- 1 comment asked “what about Latino exclusion?”
- 1 comment asked “why was demographic data taken for this survey?”

7 comments were about progress:

- 6 comments said this allows us to acknowledge the past and move on.
- 1 comment said this denies progress made.

7 comments said this looks good:

- 6 comments said this reflects well on leadership.
- 1 comment said this shows Former Mayor Kauffman and Mayor Stutsman are setting a good example.

5 comments said they would like to see more inclusion programming or “stuff like this.”

4 comments were about a perspective on racism:

- 2 said racism is over.
- 1 said racism is alive.
- 1 comment said former Mayor Kauffman and Mayor Stutsman are the real racists.

4 comments were about the sincerity of the marker:

- “To make this sincere, remove...”
  - o 1 comment said “Goshen being one of the first.”
  - o 1 comment said the mayor’s name.
- 1 comment hoped this marker is sincere.
- 1 comment said they wanted to see it accompanied by action.
- 1 comment said it was an attempt for “certain people to remain relevant.”

5 comments were about the process:

- 2 asked about the location of the marker
- 2 comments asked about how well the voice of African American residents were represented in this survey
- 1 asked if the unveiling could be accompanied by a black business expo

4 comments said this is a waste of money.

3 comments were about timing

- 2 comments said this is overdue
- 1 comment said it is time

2 comments said well done

2 comments requested to add parts to the marker:

- 1 comment asked to add the story of the Ku Klux Klan and the first diversity day

- 1 comment asked to add that before Goshen was a Sundown Town it was land stolen from indigenous people.

2 comments were about education:

- 1 comment named the value of education
- 1 comment asked for this history to be taught in schools

## Conclusion and Recommendation

Although the sundown town era of Goshen is over, its existence prevented the establishment and development of black families and black businesses in Goshen. 2 Comments even noticed the near absence of black community members.<sup>1</sup> The effect on our community didn't end in the 1970s. Comments in Question 2 say this is an apology and a healing gesture.<sup>2</sup> A comment in Question 3 mentions hoping this will bring some healing to those that lived through that time.<sup>3</sup>

The most key issue of this survey is to gather information on how a sundown town marker might impact social justice in Goshen. Some voices said a marker would be moot, 4 saying the city would be the same<sup>4</sup> with or without a marker and 2 saying Goshen would still be racist.<sup>5</sup>

Several comments were about how the marker might have an impact as a symbol, that a part of its meaning will be outside of the text itself. 28 Respondents commented that this will help the community aspire to a better future.<sup>6</sup> As a symbol it would set a good example<sup>7</sup> and be a helpful tool to educate the youth.<sup>8</sup> It also would send the message that hate is not welcome here.<sup>9</sup> A marker will function as a symbol as much as it is a vessel for text.

*"I'm proud that our leaders know that to move us to the future, diversity is a plus.  
There is no reason to fear this if you have a sense of self-worth."*

In the first question 69 comments brought up themes of apology, healing, and welcoming.<sup>10</sup> These are foundational parts of transitional justice, reconciling communities after systemic injustice. In the open space following Question 2, 45 folks were glad to know a marker was considered, 26 glad to know Goshen regrets this history and wants to heal, and 19 glad that Goshen is not trying to bury the truth.<sup>11</sup>

Respondents considered how they would feel if this marker went up. Many respondents said they'd be more proud<sup>12</sup> of Goshen and said they'd have more respect<sup>13</sup> for the city. 45 comments were glad to see a marker being considered<sup>14</sup> and 18 said they would be glad to have this message in the public.<sup>15</sup> While these responses were about the general public's emotional reaction to the marker, either for self-congratulation<sup>16</sup> or self-flagellation,<sup>17, 18</sup> some respondents said this was really made for the writers' emotional reaction. They said that this marker serves to virtue signal and congratulate Shenk, Berry, the GMA, the Common Council of 2018, and Mayors Stutsman and Kauffman.<sup>19</sup>

Some comments challenged the legitimacy of the whole project. There were a number of rhetorical questions asked including; "where is the accompanying action,"<sup>20</sup> "will we make a sign for

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<sup>1</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>2</sup> Comment section Question 2

<sup>3</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>4</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>5</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>6</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>7</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>8</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>9</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>10</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>11</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>12</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>13</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>14</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>15</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>16</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>17</sup> Comment Section Question 1

<sup>18</sup> Comment section Question 2

<sup>19</sup> Comment section Question 2

<sup>20</sup> Comment section Question 3

every social ill;”<sup>21</sup> and “what are the police doing?”<sup>22</sup> Other comments questioned the sincerity of the marker,<sup>23</sup> questioned how much input was received from the African American community,<sup>24</sup> and said that it did not effectively make a point.<sup>25</sup>

Of those opposed to the marker, some thought the marker had no point<sup>26</sup> and others thought it was a waste of time or money.<sup>27, 28</sup> 2 Comments said they’d feel shame or guilt if a marker was built.<sup>29</sup> The biggest group to be against the marker were people who selected “refuse not to answer” for the demographic questions.<sup>30</sup> They chose anonymity to voice their dissent. It is reasonable to assume then, that their response will be to grumble, not join public discourse or organize dissent. It is also important to consider where there is not opposition to the marker. 0% of respondents under 18 dissented to the marker, and 6.7% of respondents under 30 dissented; that’s 93.3% support<sup>31</sup> This marker will age well as these respondents decide on where to settle, raise families, and make up a larger part of the community.

Comments about how this would change thoughts of Goshen fall into two categories, how it would change the perception of past and present Goshen and how it might change the experience of Goshen to current residents. There were some respondents defending the past. 2 comments called the text of the marker a defamatory attack,<sup>32</sup> though not in the legal sense, as the marker’s claims are supported by historical research. The sundown town history is also defended as “a product of its time.”<sup>33</sup>

*“I was born and raised in Goshen and don't want see it [sic] image tarnished by a bunch of lies”<sup>34</sup>*

The common thread between all of these comments are that they defend Goshen by ignoring reality.

Respondents were split on if they thought it would make Goshen more or less appealing for people considering living or working in Goshen.<sup>35, 36</sup>

Current residents say they would feel more proud<sup>37</sup> and have more respect<sup>38</sup> for the city if a marker was built.

*“I'm proud that our leaders know that to move us to the future, diversity is a plus. There is no reason to fear this if you have a sense of self-worth.”<sup>39</sup>*

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<sup>21</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>22</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>23</sup> Comment section Question 4

<sup>24</sup> Comment section Question 4

<sup>25</sup> Comment section Question 2

<sup>26</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>27</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>28</sup> Comment section Question 4

<sup>29</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>30</sup> Summary Question 1

<sup>31</sup> Summary Question 1

<sup>32</sup> Comment section Question 2

<sup>33</sup> Comment section Question 2

<sup>34</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>35</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>36</sup> Comment section Question 4

<sup>37</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>38</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>39</sup> Comment section Question 3

A respondent noted that a statement like this would make living in Goshen “worth the rising cost.”<sup>40</sup> This along with 93% of respondents under the age of 30 being in favor of a marker<sup>41</sup> indicates it would strengthen commitment to and popularity in Goshen in the future.

A number of comments came up that questioned the factual claims of the text. Some asked that sources be made readily available for additional reading.<sup>42, 43</sup> Others challenged the truth of the claims, saying that the sundown town era never happened.<sup>44, 45</sup>

Comments show that across the board Goshen is a city that cares about getting “right and wrong” right. Comments criticizing the text try to get the blame right. Comments about the term “methods of exclusion” want to make sure the right practices are identified and blame is correctly distributed.<sup>46</sup> Other comments would like community involvement to be adequately named as a factor as to not be too harsh on any individual institution.<sup>47</sup>

Along with getting blame right, respondents wanted to make sure this was correctly placed in the context of Goshen’s progress. 4 comments say this ignores progress made<sup>48</sup> while 3 question the progress that Goshen has made.<sup>49</sup> Other comments are about progress here and now. 5 comments say they’d like to see more programming like this.<sup>50</sup> 5 comments say that their view of Goshen would worsen if leadership backed out of this project because they were bullied by a small minority.<sup>51</sup>

Several comments ground the marker in time. Since the marker is a symbol, its impact will be a combination of its text and context, including its context in time. 6 comments say this allows us to recognize our past and move on<sup>52</sup> while 1 says that this marker would deny progress made.<sup>53</sup> Along with what it implies about the recent past, there are comments concerned about if the present is the right time for such a project. 6 comments say now is the time, 5 that now is not the time, and 3 to let the past die.<sup>54</sup>

Several comments were about setting a cultural expectation. This gives us a concrete example of what not to repeat<sup>55</sup> and community goals to aspire to,<sup>56</sup> sending the message that hate won’t be tolerated here.<sup>57</sup> With a public expectation like this, respondents hope bigots won’t want to live here.<sup>58</sup> In that hope, 5 comments say their opinion of leadership would worsen if they backed out because of a small minority.<sup>59</sup>

Beyond an expectation, comments named that this is a way to publicly commit to being better. 20 comments said it was the right thing to do<sup>60</sup> and 40 said it was the honest thing to do.<sup>61</sup> 18 comments

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<sup>40</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>41</sup> Summary Question 1

<sup>42</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>43</sup> Comment section Question 2

<sup>44</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>45</sup> Comment section Question 2

<sup>46</sup> Comment section Question 2

<sup>47</sup> Comment section Question 2

<sup>48</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>49</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>50</sup> Comment section Question 4

<sup>51</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>52</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>53</sup> Comment section Question 4

<sup>54</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>55</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>56</sup> Comment section Question 2

<sup>57</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>58</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>59</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>60</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>61</sup> Comment section Question 1

talked about this as a chance to align thoughts and actions as a way to more effectively stop racism and build equity.<sup>62</sup> Beyond the marker, 5 comments wanted to see more programming like this.<sup>63</sup>

When Question 1 and 2 are combined, 22 comments call this text divisive,<sup>64, 65</sup> while others say it offers a pathway to community.<sup>66</sup> One comment reads in part:

*“Right now, especially at school board meetings, I feel there is a very loud, ugly minority speaking hate disguised as concern. It is important to know that is not where we are overall as a community.”<sup>67</sup>*

This comment really grounds the others in the present Goshen. Concerns that this will cause a *potential* division seem like a distraction when such *present* division is visible. While some comments say that this will cause division, they don’t name over what dividing line, who will be pit against whom. To say ‘all are welcome’ is to mark a line in the sand; hateful words and actions belong on the other side. Some comments say this will cause division and some say it is the pathway to community, but it is necessarily both.

*“I feel that you are only appealing to one culture and I refuse to be included in a past I had absolutely no part in”<sup>68</sup>*

This quote comes from someone who wants to become free to live their greatest potential, unencumbered by the past. We don’t free ourselves from history by sanitizing it. This marker allows us, as an entire community, to make it clear that we refuse to be included in a history that we had no part in.

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<sup>62</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>63</sup> Comment section Question 4

<sup>64</sup> Comment section Question 1

<sup>65</sup> Comment section Question 2

<sup>66</sup> Comment section Question 4

<sup>67</sup> Comment section Question 3

<sup>68</sup> Comment section Question 3