



MORSE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

CHALLENGE

THE CITY OF COLUMBUS WANTED TO REVIVE THE MORSE ROAD CORRIDOR, A ONCE THRIVING AREA OF NORTHERN COLUMBUS, WHICH NO LONGER MET SAFETY, PEDESTRIAN, OR TRAFFIC NEEDS.

SERVICES

- Environmental Documentation
- Geotechnical Engineering
- Lighting Design
- Maintenance of Traffic
- Public Involvement
- Right-Of-Way
- Roadway Design
- Signing and Marking
- Survey
- Traffic Signals
- Utility Coordination

AWARDS



HONOR AWARD
American Council of Engineering
Companies (ACEC) of Ohio

MORSE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

The Morse Road corridor, a once a thriving area in northern Columbus, Ohio, had experienced significant changes over the years which led to a decline in popularity among businesses, consumers, tenants and homeowners. As a highly-traveled through road in the Northland community, Morse Road's configuration did not meet existing transportation demands, was a regular site of drainage problems, and created unfriendly and potentially dangerous conditions for pedestrians.

Northland Mall, once the anchor of the neighborhood, suffered as newer, more elaborate shopping malls were built in northern and northeastern Franklin County. The mall was mostly demolished in 2004. The only remaining pieces of the mall were the former anchor stores of Lazarus, which was converted to offices for the Ohio Department of Taxation, and JCPenney, which was renovated to house a local theater group (Vaud-Villites).

The City of Columbus retained ms consultants to assist in improving the Morse Road corridor to address the issues at hand and to revive interest and pride among commercial and residential users alike.

To accomplish goals set by the city, ms designed improvements along Morse Road from Indianola

Avenue to Cleveland Avenue, a distance of approximately 2.6 miles. The project plans were completed in three phases:

- The Gateway Improvements, located at the I-71 interchange
- The Morse Road Improvements - Phase 1, located from I-71 to Karl Road
- The Morse Road Improvements - Phase 2, located from Karl Road to Cleveland Avenue

The purpose of each plan was to improve aesthetics, safety, and operational efficiency for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.

The project included construction of a raised landscaped median, curbing, a new drainage system with storm sewers and catch basins, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, turning lanes, new lighting fixtures, synchronized mast arm traffic signal installations, and landscaping.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Public involvement was an essential component to the preliminary engineering phase of the Morse Road improvements. ms led public meetings in order to interact with adjacent property owners, area residents and businesses. This interaction gave participants a better understanding of the project and allowed for the exchanging of ideas with the many stakeholders involved.

Additionally, ms developed a website to communicate with the public, and maintained the site by addressing public feedback with updates and providing up-to-date information.

TRAFFIC ENGINEERING + COMMUNICATION ENHANCEMENTS

ms determined up-to-date traffic volumes in the area and prepared a traffic access management plan. This plan was used to determine needed access points, roadway lane configurations, service road modifications, and locations for permitted U-turn

movements. The construction of the proposed improvements on the corridor resulted in better and safer operating traffic access to adjacent properties. To meet the city's standards, 14 signal installations were redesigned using mast arm signal supports.

Video detection and video traffic monitoring were added throughout the corridor, allowing for communication of the traffic signal coordination and the video devices with the city's Traffic Management Center through coaxial cable interconnect.

the ODOT/City of Columbus Freeway Management System. New signing and pavement markings were included.

Fiber optic interconnect was specified for a portion of the project in order to provide communication with

USER FRIENDLY-ADDITIONS

The project incorporated ADA-compliant sidewalks along both sides of the street, along with curb ramps and pedestrian crossings at the signalized intersections. Additionally, a bicycle lane was added adjacent to the travel lanes of the roadway.

These improvements provide a more user-friendly environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, where there previously were no facilities designed for their use.

ENHANCING A STREETScape

The project team developed plans to enhance the aesthetics of the Morse Road corridor. The project included landscaped medians, along with trees that line the roadway between the curb and the sidewalk. Decorative walls were designed at three locations along Morse Road, one being at the I-71 interchange, another at the Karl Road intersection and the last at the Cleveland Avenue intersection.

Other aesthetic features along Morse Road included:

- Decorative street light poles
- Signal mast arms
- Banner poles
- Street sign supports

UTILITY COORDINATION

The location of the many underground utilities were investigated and created accurate utility mapping. These components reduced the potential for conflicts among the proposed improvements, and subsurface utility engineering services were used to determine existing locations. The project also included the installation of new utility poles near the right-of-way in order to consolidate the overhead utilities and visually open up the Morse Road corridor.