



RAISE Cleveland East Side Trails



Submitted by: Cleveland Metroparks

Urban/Rural: Urban

Location: City of Cleveland

Project Type: Capital

Total Project Cost: \$19,500,000

RAISE Request: \$19,500,000

Date: February 28, 2024

Project Webpage: www.clevelandmetroparks.com/RAISEplanning

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I. Project Description

Project Summary

Cleveland Metroparks requests \$19.5 million from the RAISE program to construct two paved multi-purpose trails (“trails”) in the city of Cleveland in Cuyahoga County: the Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North (SVDC North) and the Morgana Run Booth Avenue Extension (MRBA) (see Figure 1 location map). Design and engineering of these trails is funded through a 2021 planning award of \$950,000 (total cost \$1.5 million) made to Cleveland

Metroparks for the *RAISE Cleveland Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning Project* (“RAISE Planning”), which also includes preliminary engineering/feasibility study of the Iron Court/Opportunity Corridor Connector (ICOC) and the Euclid Creek Greenway Phase 2 North (ECG) and are not a part of this request.

The SVDC North and MRBA will fill critical gaps in the active transportation network on the east side of Cleveland in the North Broadway-Slavic Village and Union-Miles neighborhoods. They will connect to existing trails and others under development to provide safe and continuous off-road access to Downtown Cleveland, transit, civic, educational, and other key destinations where there currently are no trails.

The SVDC North and MRBA will improve infrastructure and connectivity in five census tracts, all of which are designated as Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities. The median household income for the combined project area is \$20,976 and 30.5% of households do not have access to a vehicle.¹



Figure 1. SVDC North (blue) and MRBA (purple) location map; inset general location within the State of Ohio

¹ Cleveland Metroparks GIS analysis of project area using US Census Bureau 2016-2020 ACS Block Group Data geodatabase with a weighted one-mile buffer, February 14, 2024.

Statement of Work

After entering into a grant agreement with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) for the 2021 RAISE Planning project in January 2023, Cleveland Metroparks began designing these trails in direct partnership with the City of Cleveland (ODOT Project ID 117320). Detailed feasibility studies including traffic analysis, preliminary plans, environmental data, public involvement summary, and cost estimates were completed for the SVDC North and MRBA in February 2024 and are available on the project application webpage at www.clevelandmetroparks.com/RAISEplanning. Design and engineering will be completed by June 2025 under the RAISE Planning project per the milestone schedule.

Transportation Challenges Addressed

The existing trail and bikeway network on the east side of Cleveland has several large gaps, reducing its effectiveness and accessibility. Vulnerable road users are exposed to safety risks from high rates of crashes as discussed in the Safety Merit Criterion. Active transportation investments need to be linked through construction of the regionally significant SVDC North and MRBA. These projects will also provide needed connections to the transit network. Since close to a third of the households in the proposed area do not have access to an automobile, an active transportation network is critical to allow residents to commute to work and school and access amenities like public parks.²

The RAISE Cleveland East Side Trails project presents an opportunity to correct decades of isolation and disparity by overcoming transportation barriers that have severely impacted resident mobility and economic opportunities.

Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North (SVDC North)

Total Construction Cost: \$11.5 million, **RAISE Request: \$11.5 million**

The SVDC North will transform Broadway Avenue (SR-14), a four-lane urban principal arterial, into a Complete Street through a road diet to install a trail from reclaimed space within the public right-of-way (see Figure 2). It will connect at the north to an existing trail built by ODOT at the East 14th Street/Orange Avenue intersection that links to a trail along the Lorain-Carnegie Bridge in Downtown Cleveland. At the south, it will connect to an existing phase of the SVDC, also previously constructed by ODOT, at the Broadway Avenue/Roseville Court intersection. Ultimately this ±1.7-mile trail, in conjunction with other



Figure 2. SVDC North near E. 14th Street

² Cleveland Metroparks GIS analysis, February 14, 2024.

phases of the SVDC that total another 1.5 miles and connect to the Morgana Run Trail, will link downtown to the Slavic Village neighborhood, Cleveland Metroparks' Washington Reservation, and the Towpath Trail (US Bike Route 21, State Bike Route 1). The SVDC North is identified in the regionally adopted Cuyahoga Greenways Plan as Regional Link 13B. View interactive mapping at www.cuyahogagreenways.com.

Major items of work include roadway modifications necessary for the road diet to include new curbing, pavement repairs and asphalt planning to establish a new crown, drainage adjustments, and installation of the new 10' trail. Overhead power and telecommunications lines as well as some roadway lighting will be moved along portions of the corridor. Seven traffic signals will be replaced or enhanced and the decks of three bridges will be modified to accommodate the trail. Significant modification of the Broadway and E. 34th Street intersection, which serves as the entrance to GCRTA's E. 34th Street Rapid Transit Station, is proposed to enhance pedestrian as well as vehicular safety. Additional streetscape improvements including a combination of upgraded street lighting and new pedestrian scale light poles and luminaires, high-visibility crosswalks, plazas and gateways, landscaping and 260 new street trees will be installed along this currently barren roadway, improving air quality and heat island effects.

Morgana Run Booth Avenue Extension (MRBA)

Total Construction Cost: \$8,000,000, **RAISE Request: \$8,000,000**

The ±1.0-mile MRBA will connect the southern terminus of the existing 2.1-mile Morgana Run Trail at Jones Road south along a small portion of the rail corridor owned by the City, ramp down to Booth Avenue and through the roadway tunnel under the Norfolk Southern railway (see Figure 3). East of the tunnel, a road diet will provide space to install a 10' wide trail along Booth Avenue, E. 91st Street, and Miles Park Avenue before crossing Broadway Avenue to an existing 500' section of trail to the Warner Road Bridges to the Mill Creek Falls Area of Cleveland Metroparks' Garfield Park Reservation and its 3.1-mile Mill Creek Trail. The MRBA is identified in the Cuyahoga Greenways Plan as Critical Gap 7.

Major items of work include roadway modifications necessary for the road diet to include new curbing, pavement repairs and asphalt planning to create a new crown, drainage adjustments, and installation of the new 10' trail.

Overhead power and telecommunications lines be moved to the relocated tree lawn along E. 91st Street and Miles Park Avenue. One traffic signal at E. 91st Street and Harvard Avenue will be replaced, one pair of Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Hybrid Beacons (RRFB) will be installed at Booth Avenue, and a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon will be installed in conjunction with a raised



Figure 3. MRBA Booth Avenue Underpass Area

pedestrian refuge island to improve safety at this busy section of the four-lane Broadway Avenue. Lanes on the Warner Road Bridges over Norfolk Southern and Mill Creek will be shifted to allow for a trail to be installed on the bridge deck. Additional streetscape improvements including a combination of upgraded street lighting and new pedestrian scale light poles and luminaires, high-visibility crosswalks, and landscaping and 104 new street trees will create the community-desired greenway experience. There are plaza areas at the Booth Avenue Underpass and one at E. 91st Street and Miles Park Avenue.

Project History & Community Support

Cuyahoga Greenways Plan & Cuyahoga Greenway Partners

In 2016, extensive community and stakeholder engagement began on the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan*, a countywide trails plan to guide development of a network of off-road trails and on-road, low-stress bike facilities to make active transportation accessible to all. Completed in 2019, the plan was led by the Cuyahoga Greenway Partners (CGP), a partnership established in 2014 consisting of key executives and staff from the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA), Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, ODOT, Bike Cleveland, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, and Cleveland Metroparks. The group works to coordinate infrastructure projects and advance the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan*.

The RAISE Planning grant was developed with the consensus of the CGP that the four subject projects were the most significant and impactful from the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan* to compete for the RAISE opportunity. The CGP continues to support the SVDC North and MRBA for this construction application, as evidenced by letters of support from member agencies. Likewise, extensive public engagement has been conducted in partnership with Community Development Corporations over the past six months to ensure the trails best serve the needs and desires of the local neighborhoods.

Interactive mapping at www.cuyahogagreenways.com shows the routes for the SVDC North and MRBA as well as the many existing and planned trails and bikeways to which they will connect. Additionally, further support and the planning basis for these projects are demonstrated below. Please see the application webpage for links to relevant plans.

Key Documents & Initiatives

- SVDC is one of 27 "Regional Links" in the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan*
- MRBA is one of 12 "Critical Gaps" in the *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan*
- Broadway Avenue is one GCRTA's 10 near-term priority transit corridors from its 2020 Strategic Plan and will begin a Transit Oriented Development Study in 2024 that is complementary to the SVDC North and MRBA
- Both trails are priorities of Slavic Village Development Corporation, a co-recipient of FY 2022 Thriving Communities Program grant specifically assisting with SVDC and MRBA
- MRBA is a priority of Union Miles Development Corporation, sponsor of the current Morgana Run Extension technical assistance project with the National Parks Service's Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program

- *Morgana Run Extension Study* completed in 2014 by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
- *Slavic Village Greenway: Bike/Pedestrian/Transit Connections* (2008) and the *Downtown Connector Trail: Washington Reservation Metropark to East 9th Street* study (2010 plus 2012 update) sponsored by City of Cleveland and Slavic Village Development

Project Location

The SVDC North and MRBA are both located in the city of Cleveland and are both fully within the 2020 Census designated Cleveland Urbanized Area (17668). Project components run through Cuyahoga County census tracts 9801, 1097.01, 1979, 1158, and 1275.01.³ Both projects directly serve and benefit census tracts that are classified as Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities.⁴ Detailed maps are included in the Project Budget Section and aerial flyovers are available at 2023raise.cuyahogagreenways.org.

Broadway Avenue runs from Downtown Cleveland at its northern end through the Broadway-Slavic Village neighborhood, location of the SVDC North, to the Union-Miles neighborhood and MRBA to the south. It is part of the 110-mile Ohio & Erie Canalway Scenic Byway linking the Canal Corridor to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Prior to construction of I-77 just to its west, Broadway was a thriving primary thoroughfare for the city of Cleveland. Construction of the Ohio and Erie Canal in the 1820s and the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad soon thereafter, a wave of English and Irish immigrants came to area, followed later by immigrants of Slovak, Polish, and Czech descent. Work was plentiful in the many steel and manufacturing plants in the nearby Industrial Valley along the Cuyahoga River. Many workers walked to their jobs or took streetcars or other public transit. As Cleveland's manufacturing sector declined in the second half of the 20th Century, this once populous area began to hollow out as residents moved to the sprawling suburbs enabled by highway expansion. The area is now home to a diverse population that is majority Black or African American.

The city of Cleveland, and the Broadway-Slavic Village and Union-Miles neighborhoods specifically have been hit especially hard through decades of disinvestment, with the former often being cited as the epicenter of the foreclosure crisis of the late 2000's driven by sub-prime mortgage lending.⁵ Past transportation decisions allowed railroads and highways to cut across these neighborhoods creating pockets of isolation that experience poor air quality, increased temperatures, and unsafe and inhospitable environments for pedestrians and bicyclists. Providing a more equitable distribution of the benefits of multimodal transportation from the RAISE Cleveland East Side Trails project will help begin to address some of these disparities to provide safe access to jobs, school, transit, parks, and other destinations.

³ "Areas of Persistent Poverty & Historically Disadvantaged Communities," USDOT ArcGIS web application, accessed February 2, 2024, <https://maps.dot.gov/BTS/GrantProjectLocationVerification/>.

⁴ Tract 9801 is the Industrial Valley and has no residential population and is excluded from the Historically Disadvantaged Communities data set but is included in the Areas of Persistent Poverty.

⁵ Robert L. Smith, "Slavic Village, Devastated by the National Housing Crisis, is Battling Back," September 15, 2013, accessed February 18, 2024, https://www.cleveland.com/business/2013/09/slavic_village_devastated_by_t.html.

II. Project Budget

The total cost of the Cuyahoga Greenways: RAISE East Side Trails is \$19.5 million, comprised of \$11.5 million for the Slavic Village Downtown Connector North (SVDC North) and \$8.0 million for the Morgana Run Booth Avenue Extension (MRBA), as shown in Table 1. Both projects have independent utility; however, they work best together to strengthen the overall active transportation network on the east side of Cleveland.

The SVDC North and MRBA projects are consistent with and supportive of the goals of the RAISE program and are in alignment with the *Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act* (86 FR 64355). These projects have been developed with the continuing input and collaboration from members of the public and multiple partners and agencies to ensure they are highly impactful.

Table 1. RAISE Request

	Component 1: SVDC North	Component 2: MRBA	Both Components	Both Components
Funding Source	Funding Amount	Funding Amount	Total Funding	Percentage Federal Funds
RAISE Funds	\$ 11,500,000	\$ 8,000,000	\$ 19,500,000	100.0%
Total Project Cost	\$ 11,500,000	\$ 8,000,000	\$ 19,500,000	100.0%

Both projects directly serve and benefit census tracts that are classified as Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities.⁶ Cleveland Metroparks requests funding at a 100% federal share and no additional federal funds are associated with this project. Additionally, the project timeline assumes that it will take approximately one year after grant award announcements to enter into a grant agreement and no funds will be expended in advance of this; therefore, no advance payments will be requested. Detailed cost estimates are included in the projects' feasibility studies, submitted to the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) for review in February 2024. See attachments 12 and 13 for the SVDC North and MRBA feasibility studies, respectively. Both are available on project application webpage at www.clevelandmetroparks.com/RAISEplanning.

The Benefit-Cost Analysis demonstrates that both projects return high benefit-cost ratios (BCR). At a 3.1% discount rate, SVDC North has 7.97:1 and MRBA is 4.72:1. Together, the total project BCR is 6.64:1.

Tables 2a, 2b, and 2c allocate project costs across 2020 census tracts, 2010 Disadvantaged census tracts from the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), and census designated urban areas with populations more than 200,000, respectively. The SVDC North and MRBA are both located in the city of Cleveland and are both fully within the 2020 Census designated Cleveland Urbanized Area (17668).

⁶ Note that the SVDC North runs alongside and through parts of the Industrial Valley census tract 9801 that has zero population.

Table 2a. Costs per 2020 Census Tracts

	Component 1: SVDC North	Component 2: MRBA	Both Components
Costs per 2020 Census Tract	Costs per Census Tract	Costs per Census Tract	Costs per Census Tract
9801	\$ 4,050,000		\$ 4,050,000
1097.01	\$ 1,900,000		\$ 1,900,000
1979	\$ 5,550,000		\$ 5,550,000
1158		\$ 1,494,000	\$ 1,494,000
1275.01		\$ 6,506,000	\$ 6,506,000
Total Project Costs	\$ 11,500,000	\$ 8,000,000	\$ 19,500,000

Table 2b. Costs per 2010 Disadvantaged Census Tracts from CEJST Layer

	Component 1: SVDC North	Component 2: MRBA	Both Components
Costs per 2010 Census Tract	Costs per Census Tract	Costs per Census Tract	Costs per Census Tract
9801	\$ 4,050,000		\$ 4,050,000
1097.01	\$ 1,900,000		\$ 1,900,000
1105.01	\$ 5,550,000		\$ 5,550,000
1153		\$ 130,100	\$ 130,100
1158		\$ 1,494,000	\$ 1,494,000
1275.01		\$ 6,375,900	\$ 6,375,900
Total Project Costs	\$11,500,000	\$8,000,000	\$19,500,000

Table 2c. Census Designated Urban Areas with Populations More than 200,000 (2020 Census)

	Component 1: SVDC North	Component 2: MRBA	Both Components
Urban/Rural	Costs	Costs	Costs
Urban	\$ 11,500,000	\$ 8,000,000	\$ 19,500,000
Rural	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Project Costs	\$ 11,500,000	\$ 8,000,000	\$ 19,500,000

Budget Description

The following summary cost estimates were developed by the RAISE Planning engineer in February 2024 as part of the feasibility studies, which contain more detailed estimates.

Table 3. Detailed Project Budget

Description	Component 1:	Component 2:	Both Components
	SVDC North	MRBA	
	Costs	Costs	Costs
Roadway	\$ 815,231	\$ 824,593	\$ 1,639,824
Erosion Control	\$ 92,455	\$ 93,535	\$ 185,990
Drainage	\$ 825,216	\$ 566,163	\$ 1,391,379
Pavement	\$ 1,554,431	\$ 871,904	\$ 2,426,335
Water Work	\$ 150,700	\$ 64,950	\$ 215,650
Sanitary	\$ 89,700	\$ 52,900	\$ 142,600
Lighting	\$ 450,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 700,000
Traffic Control	\$ 70,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 110,000
Traffic Signals	\$ 615,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 865,000
Retaining Walls	\$ -	\$ 165,000	\$ 165,000
Structures	\$ 250,000	\$ 240,000	\$ 490,000
Maintenance of Traffic	\$ 92,175	\$ 79,925	\$ 172,100
Amenities	\$ 1,903,294	\$ 1,170,250	\$ 3,073,544
Miscellaneous	\$ 487,800	\$ 437,800	\$ 925,600
Subtotal	\$ 7,396,002	\$ 5,107,020	\$ 12,503,022
Contingency 25%	\$ 1,849,001	\$ 1,276,755	\$ 3,125,756
Inflation 11.92%	\$ 1,102,004	\$ 760,946	\$ 1,862,950
Total Probable Construction Cost	\$ 10,347,007	\$ 7,144,721	\$ 17,491,728
Construction Engineering and Inspection (12%)	\$ 1,241,641	\$ 857,367	\$ 2,099,007
Total Project Costs	\$11,588,648	\$8,002,087	\$19,590,735
Total RAISE Request	\$11,500,000	\$8,000,000	\$19,500,000

Sources, Uses & Availability

On February 15, 2024, the Board of Park Commissioners of Cleveland Metropolitan Park District (“Cleveland Metroparks”) passed a resolution authorizing submittal of a RAISE construction application for this project. This resolution enables Cleveland Metroparks’ Chief Executive Officer to enter into grant agreements and necessary documents to accept the grant award and make funds available as needed until reimbursement from the RAISE program. The resolution is provided in Attachment 6.

Upon notice of award of funding for the RAISE Cleveland East Side Trails Project, Cleveland Metroparks will pursue addition of the project to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), the region’s metropolitan planning organization, and inclusion on the State TIP will follow shortly thereafter.

Contingency Amount & Level of Design

A contingency of 25% is included in the cost estimate to allow a buffer as design progresses to completion. Robust feasibility studies were prepared for the SVDC North and MRBA in February 2024 with a level of design of approximately 20%. They are available on the project application webpage. The SVDC North and MRBA are both priority projects for Cleveland Metroparks and

the City of Cleveland, and any unexpected cost overruns may be addressed through fundraising, State Clean Ohio Trail Fund grants, or agency funds.

Cost Estimates & Cost Share

The project cost estimates include an inflation factor of 11.92% to protect against unexpected cost increases. The inflation rate is based on ODOT's inflation calculator and an assumption that the midpoint of construction will be January 1, 2026. Also included are construction engineering and inspection costs of 12%, which is consistent with amounts Cleveland Metroparks has had on other recent federally funded trail projects. Cleveland Metroparks requests 100% Federal funding for the RAISE Cleveland East Side Trails project.

The SVDC North alignment is shown in an illustrative plan view that list some key design factors in figures 4 and 5. The MRBA alignment is shown in illustrative plan view in Figure 6.

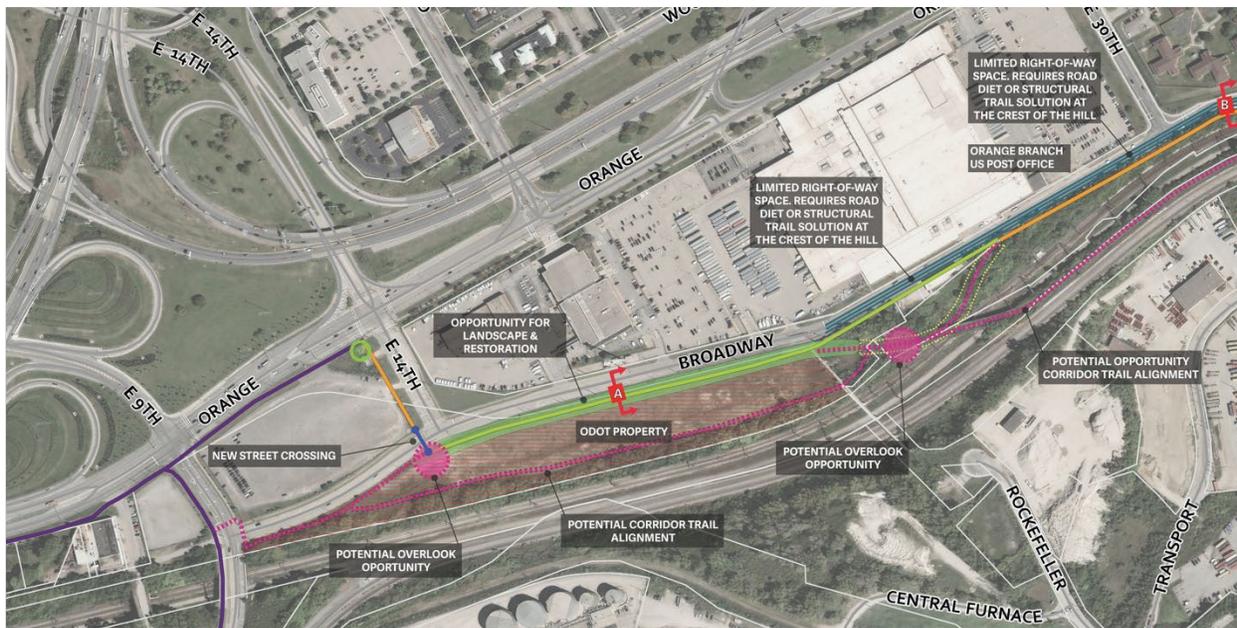


Figure 4. SVDC North Plan, Northern Portion

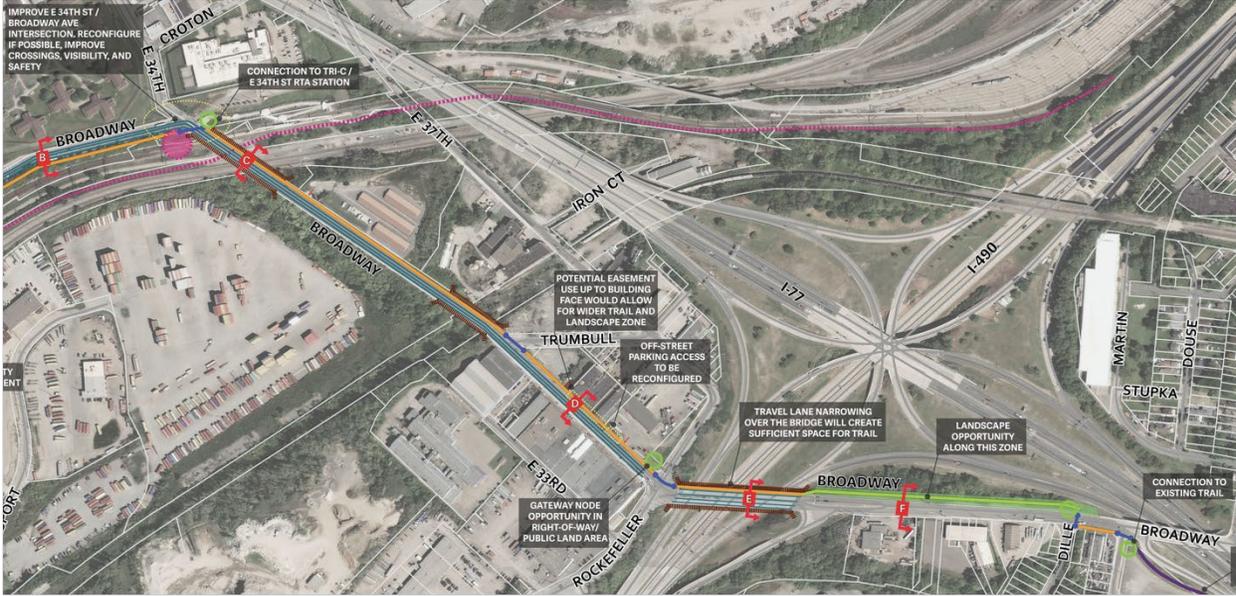


Figure 5. SVDC North Plan, Southern Portion

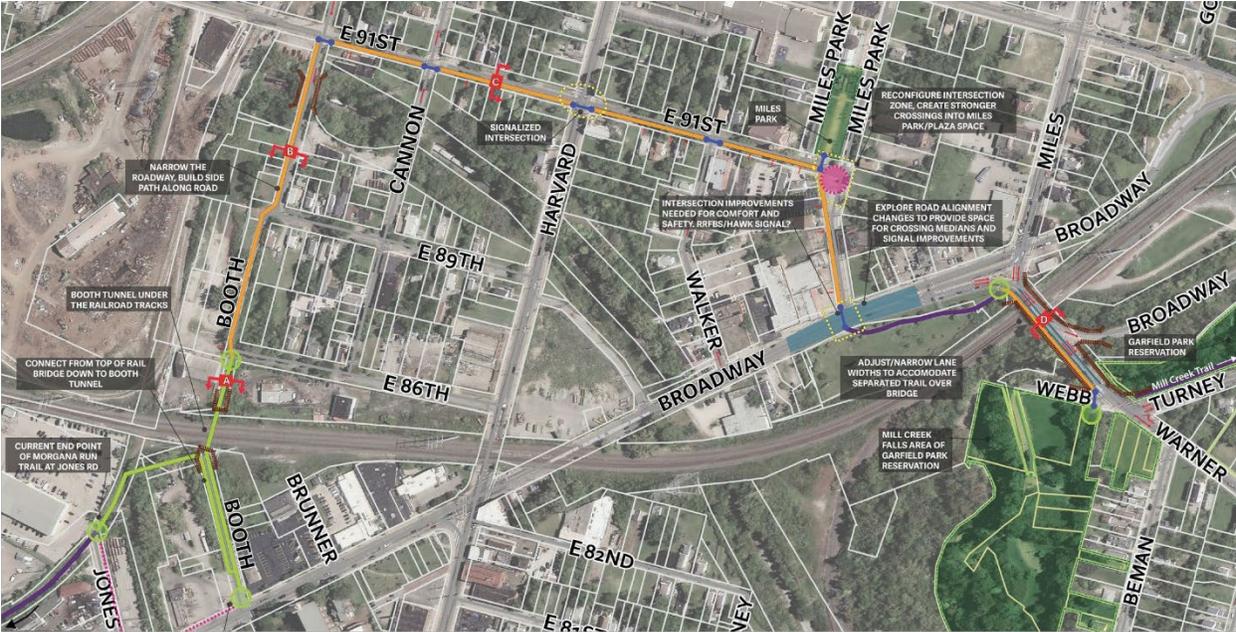


Figure 6. MRBA Plan

III. Merit Criteria

Merit Criteria Summary	
Challenge	Solution
Safety	
High incidence of documented bicycle and pedestrian accidents	Install a shared use path; New pedestrian refuge island with a pedestrian-activated hybrid beacon (MRBA); Complete Streets; High-visibility crosswalks
Project area roads have a high Level of Traffic Stress (LTS)	Increased network connectivity; “All ages and abilities” option
Environmental Sustainability	
Transportation planning decisions have had disproportionately negative impacts on disadvantaged populations	Directly engage and involve neighborhood residents in transportation design
Air Quality in Northeast Ohio is challenged	Reduced vehicle emissions and harmful greenhouse gases
The existing tree canopy virtually nonexistent and impervious surface rates are extremely high	364 new street trees; Vegetation in parks and along trails plays a role in improving air quality and helping nearby areas avoid the costs associated with pollution
Quality of Life	
Lack of affordable, safe, and convenient transportation options	Improve access to adjacent trails, transit, and parks, allowing residents more opportunities to access work, school, daily activities, and recreation
Long commute times by transit	Facilitate connections to the transit network
Negative health impacts due to urban heat islands and lack of greenspace	Proximity of trails and parkland improves human health and provides real economic benefits
Mobility and Community Connectivity	
Lack of systemwide connectivity	Filling Critical Gaps and Regional Links in the <i>Cuyahoga Greenways Plan</i> ; Access to trails, transit, and micromobility
Barriers to access and affordability	Complete Streets; Access for all
Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity	
Lack of economic growth	Partnership that includes community development corporations; Complementary economic development initiatives
Underutilized and vacant properties	Redevelopment of vacant or underutilized sites and Brownfields
State of Good Repair	
Existing roadway network is outdated	Utilize existing public right-of-way to create Complete Streets
Unconnected trails are harder to maintain	Cleveland Metroparks will manage and maintain the new trails
Partnership and Collaboration	
Transportation projects are often developed without meaningful participation	Diverse project team; Extensive public engagement process and involvement of community development corporations
Innovation	
Transportation signals in the city of Cleveland are outmoded	Prototype smart signals and innovative technologies
Expanding network of trails and park areas to manage and monitor	Drone program to assist with monitoring natural resources and infrastructure, especially bridges
SVDC North and MRBA are complicated and costly to build	Innovative Project Delivery with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) delegation authority vested in ODOT; Cleveland Metroparks and City of Cleveland partnership

Safety

Challenge

There is a **high incidence of documented bicycle and pedestrian accidents** in the Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North (SVDC North) and the Morgana Run Booth Avenue Extension (MRBA) areas, with multiple fatal and serious injury (FSI) crashes. Both project areas are classified as Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities. Both are also in Justice40 Transportation Disadvantaged census tracts.⁷

Data on crashes involving bicycles and pedestrians within the SVDC North and MRBA project areas were gathered from the GIS Crash Analysis Tool (GCAT) tool within the ODOT Transportation Information Mapping System (TIMS) online data system using a one-mile buffer around the projects. Between 2018 and 2023, there were 216 recorded crashes involving a bicycle or pedestrian for the SVDC North project area, including seven fatal and 26 serious injury crashes (Figure 7). For the same period in the MRBA project area, there were 69 crashes, including three fatal and 11 serious injury crashes (Figure 8).⁸

The majority of Broadway Avenue around the SVDC North is listed as “critical” in ODOT Highway Safety Improvement Plan (HSIP) Pedestrian Priority Corridors mapping due to the higher incidence of crashes compared to other locations across the state. For the MRBA project area, Broadway Avenue, Harvard Avenue, Miles Avenue, and Warner Road are all listed as “high”.⁹ Additionally, the City of Cleveland’s *Vision Zero Plan* lists Broadway Avenue in

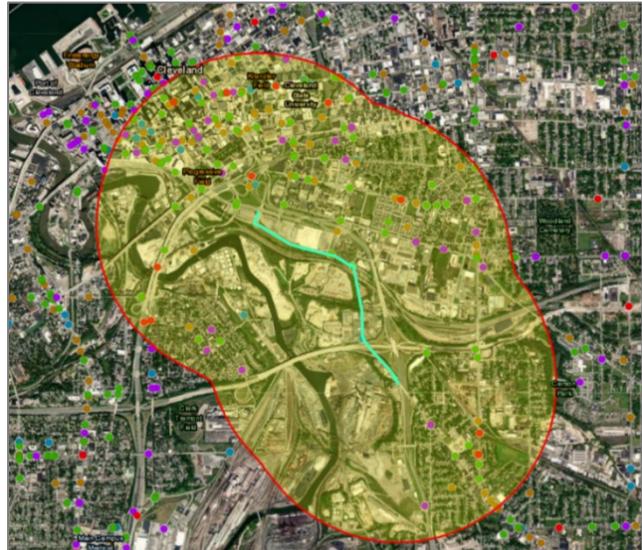


Figure 7. SVDC North Project Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Crash Data (2018-2023) in ODOT TIMS Viewer

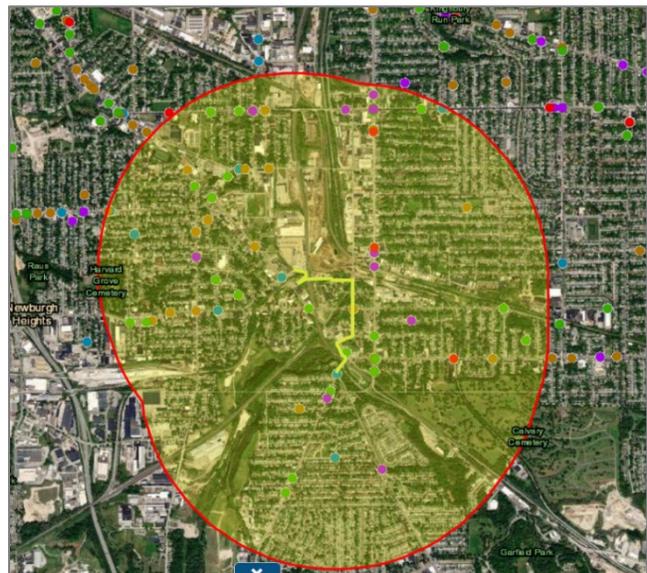


Figure 8. MRBA Project Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Crash Data (2018-2023) in ODOT TIMS Viewer.

⁷ Note that the SVDC North runs alongside and through parts of the Industrial Valley census tract 9801 that has zero population.

⁸ Cleveland Metroparks analysis of Ohio Department of Transportation’s GIS Crash Analysis Tool (GCAT) of Ohio Department of Public Safety crash data. Crash data for the project area for years 2018-2023 was pulled based on a one-mile buffer around the digitized project route. GCAT data records are included in the BCA spreadsheet. Accessed February 18, 2024, <https://gis.dot.state.oh.us/tims/CrashAnalytics/Search>.

⁹ “Safety Map Viewer,” ODOT ArcGIS web application, accessed February 23, 2024, <https://gis3.dot.state.oh.us/SafetyViewer/>. Note: Screenshots are available on project application webpage.

the vicinity of MRBA, along with adjacent E. 93rd Street, as two of its 25 one-mile segments with the highest rates of FSI crashes in the city.¹⁰

Furthermore, according to NOACA’s analysis, the **project area roads have a high Level of Traffic Stress (LTS)**. Broadway Avenue has LTS of 4 (“Comfortable for Experts Only”) for the majority of the SVDC North route with the remainder LTS 3 (“Comfortable for Confident Cyclists”). For MRBA there is a mix of LTS with Broadway at 3 and surrounding major roads either 3 or 4.¹¹

Solution

The SVDC North and MRBA will **install a shared use path** where there is none, creating safe, separated facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians. This is expected to reduce crashes by 25% based on Crash Modification Factor (CMF) ID 9250, which is the dominant CMF used in the Benefit-Cost Analysis though others will also be employed.¹² Modifications to five bridge decks and one underpass will also occur, directly addressing safety and comfort issues to remove these barriers to access.

For MRBA, in addition to the trail, a **new pedestrian refuge island with a pedestrian-activated hybrid beacon** at Broadway Avenue will be installed to facilitate crossing this busy roadway and to access GCRTA transit service along the corridor. According to the USDOT’s report *Improving Safety for Pedestrians and Bicyclists Accessing Transit*, “Refuge islands allow pedestrians and bicyclists to cross one direction of motor vehicle traffic at a time and on particularly long crossings, the islands can provide pedestrians and bicyclists with a place of refuge to pause and rest. These treatments have been shown to reduce pedestrian crashes by 32 percent.”¹³

Overall, a road diet will be employed to reduce excess vehicular cartway and create space for the trail and additional improvements for both projects, creating **Complete Streets**, a strategy to expand opportunities for travel via walking, biking, and transit that improves safety and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. This strategy is outlined in the City of Cleveland’s “2022 Complete and Green Streets ordinance”¹⁴, Ohio’s *State Highway Safety Plan* (SHSP), and the USDOT’s *National Roadway Safety Strategy*.¹⁵ As noted in the SHSP, “Fatal and serious injuries involving pedestrians and bicyclists are concentrated on arterial roadways, primarily in urban areas. Crashes involving people walking and biking are common on roadways that lack dedicated infrastructure such as sidewalks, bike lanes, paths and marked crossings.”¹⁶ The SVDC North and MRBA both address this issue by creating dedicated bicycle and pedestrian

¹⁰ *Vision Zero Action Plan*, City of Cleveland, 2022, accessed February 18, 2024, <https://www.visionzerocle.org/pages/action-plan>.

¹¹ “Level of Traffic Stress,” NOACA ArcGIS Web Application, accessed February 25, 2024, <https://gis.noaca.org/portal/>. Note: Screenshots are available on project application webpage.

¹² “Crash Modification Factors Clearinghouse: Crash Modification Factor ID 9250,” USDOT, accessed February 19, 2024, <https://www.cmfclearinghouse.org/>.

¹³ *Improving Safety for Pedestrians and Bicyclists Accessing Transit*, USDOT FHWA/FTA, September 2022, accessed February 19, 2024, https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/ped_transit/fhwasa21130_PedBike_Access_to_transit.pdf, 59.

¹⁴ View the City of Cleveland’s “Complete and Green Streets” ordinance on the project application webpage.

¹⁵ *Nation Roadway Safety Strategy*, USDOT, January 2022, accessed February 13, 2024, <https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2022-02/USDOT-National-Roadway-Safety-Strategy.pdf>, 18.

¹⁶ *Ohio Strategic Highway Safety Plan*, ODOT 2020, accessed February 24, 2024, <https://www.transportation.ohio.gov/working/publications/strategic-highway-safety-plan>, 36.

infrastructure. The projects will employ additional CMFs like **high-visibility crosswalks**, which have been shown to reduce pedestrian injury crashes by up to 40%¹⁷, accessibility improvements, advanced warning signage, and lighting for the trails.

Creation of dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facilities will significantly increase the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians in the project area. Off-road trails also improve safety for automobiles by removing areas of conflict. The SVDC North and MRBA will also fill major gaps in the trail system, allowing for **increased network connectivity** that will address the area’s high LTS ratings by creating an **“all ages and abilities” option**.

In the following quote from her letter of support for the RAISE Cleveland East Side Trails application, Cleveland Councilwoman Rebecca Maurer notes the impact these trails will have on area residents:

These trails have been years in the making and this grant will make a significant difference for tens of thousands of Clevelanders and almost all the residents of my Ward who are seeking safe, reliable non-car transit options. - Rebecca Maurer, Ward 12 Cleveland City Councilwoman

Environmental Sustainability

Challenge

Past **transportation planning decisions have had disproportionately negative impacts on disadvantaged populations**. Past policies favoring automobiles over people enabled construction of highways like I-77 and I-490 that enabled rapid disinvestment in the urban core in favor of suburban outmigration. These decisions impacted the whole of Cleveland and its inner-ring suburbs, and coupled with changes to the underlying economic base, have left the city with a population that is roughly half of what it was at its peak in 1950. Shifting transportation investment away from the core hollowed out the city’s tax base, and has left remaining residents with few transportation choices, deteriorated infrastructure, and harmful health effects.

Residents in the SVDC North and MRBA project areas are economically disadvantaged with median household incomes of \$18,820 and \$29,624, respectively. In the SVDC North project area, 63.1% of households within a half-mile of the project do not have access to a vehicle and for MRBA it is 20.1%. Within a mile of both projects, the rate is 30.5%. The area is racially diverse, with a majority Black or African American residents in both project areas.

Air Quality in Northeast Ohio is challenged due to continuing industrial operations and non-point pollution, with on-road vehicles now accounting for the largest share of criteria pollutant emissions at 31.6%. Cuyahoga County, location of the SVDC North and MRBA projects, as well as most surrounding counties, are in moderate nonattainment for Ozone (8-hr). The county is a maintenance area for Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}) (24-hr and annual) and Carbon Monoxide, and

¹⁷ “Countermeasure Tech Sheet: Crosswalk Visibility Enhancements,” USDOT FHWA, accessed February 26, 2024, <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures/crosswalk-visibility-enhancements>.

in 2017, a portion of the county was redesignated as a maintenance area for Lead.¹⁸ While Cuyahoga County has recently moved into maintenance on this measure, reductions in non-point pollution are needed so it does not slip back into nonattainment.

The existing tree canopy virtually nonexistent and impervious surface rates are extremely high in the three census tracts through which the SVDC North runs. Tree canopy coverage is 4.4%, 5.6%, and 13.7%, while impervious surface coverage is 69.5%, 55.9%, and 54.7% for tracts 1097.01, 1979.00, and 9801.00, respectively. For MRBA census tracts 1275.01 and 1158, the rates are somewhat better at 19.5% and 23.9% for tree canopy and 44.3% and 43.4% for impervious surface, respectively.¹⁹ Both project areas are still far below the National Forest Service’s recommended 41% tree canopy coverage for urban areas.²⁰

Solution

In order to **directly engage and involve neighborhood residents in transportation design** in the SVDC North and MRBA project area neighborhoods in the project, two major rounds of public engagement were held that involved many mediums for spreading information about the project and opportunities for interaction, including direct door-to-door delivery of project surveys to more than 800 homes. The Partnership and Collaboration criterion includes more detailed information about these outreach efforts.

By providing additional, safe options for walking and bicycling that improve access to existing transit service a shift to these less environmentally damaging modes will result in **reduced vehicle emissions and harmful greenhouse gases**. The project directly supports the 2019 *Cuyahoga County Climate Action Plan*. One strategy of the plan is to reduce trips taken by automobiles with a goal to “Make Cuyahoga County a much more bikeable and walkable location in the country and increase the combined mode share of biking and walking.”²¹ Building out the active transportation network to encourage resiliency and mode shift is consistent with both the City of Cleveland’s and NOACA’s Climate Action Plans, both of which are underway. Practices are also laid out in the *U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization*, such as increasing the convenience and efficiency of the active transportation network through filling gaps.²²

Public engagement activities have yielded support for the trails and the desire to include opportunities for greening and additional park space, **364 new street trees**, natural landscaping, and plaza spaces, in addition of lighting to improve safety and visibility. *The*

¹⁸ “2022 Air Quality Trends Report,” NOACA, March 2023, accessed February 25, 2024, <https://www.noaca.org/regional-planning/air-quality-planning/air-quality-trends-reports>, 1.

¹⁹ “Greenprint Explorer,” Cuyahoga County Planning Commission ArcGIS Web Application, accessed February 25, 2024. <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/70b82141d3fb4b9e84057a482362fe7b/page/Application-Home/>. Note: Screenshots are available on project application webpage.

²⁰ “Land as Nature: Ecological and Geological Features,” Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, accessed February 25, 2024, <https://www.countyplanning.us/projects/cuyahoga-county-greenprint/land-as-nature/>.

²¹ *Cuyahoga County Climate Action Plan*, Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, May 15, 2019, accessed June 26, 2021, <https://www.countyplanning.us/projects/climate-action-plan/>, 25.

²² *U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization*, accessed February 13, 2024, <https://www.transportation.gov/priorities/climate-and-sustainability/us-national-blueprint-transportation-decarbonization>, 5.

Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks study determined that the **vegetation in parks and along trails plays a role in improving air quality and helping nearby areas avoid the costs associated with pollution.**

Broadway Avenue was one of the original, key corridors of Cleveland and has many assets that remain in place to build from, including civic institutions, churches, and a dense neighborhood street grid. Investing in building the SVDC North and MRBA will help support and promote opportunities to leverage these assets, like the Miles Park Historic District adjacent to the MRBA and its



Figure 9. MRBA Plaza Area Across from Miles Park Historic District

former Carnegie Library, a 13,800 square foot building completed in 1906. The Miles Park Plaza will be connected across E. 91st Street to the trail, providing opportunities to enhance its use (see rendering in Figure 9).

Cleveland Metroparks has continuously proven to be a catalytic engine across Cuyahoga County and the Greater Cleveland area and this proposal further exemplifies their progressive approach to create a sustainable and resilient community through highly effective multimodal transportation investments. - Derek Schafer, Executive Director of West Creek Conservancy

Quality of Life

Challenge

There is a **lack of affordable, safe, and convenient transportation options** in the project area. Many users prefer the inherent safety of a protected facility, especially families traveling with children or for a safe route to school. This finding is consistent with results of data from other cities and nationwide, and points to a scenario where those who have access to a personal vehicle may be compelled to drive even short distances and those who do not must contend with unsafe conditions.

As part of its work on Job Access and targeted investment of Federal-aid funding, NOACA developed online mapping tools showing the job hubs with the highest job densities in the metropolitan area. Downtown Cleveland is one of these hubs, and while SVDC North is partially within the hub and MRBA is within a few miles, Figure 10 demonstrates **long commute times**

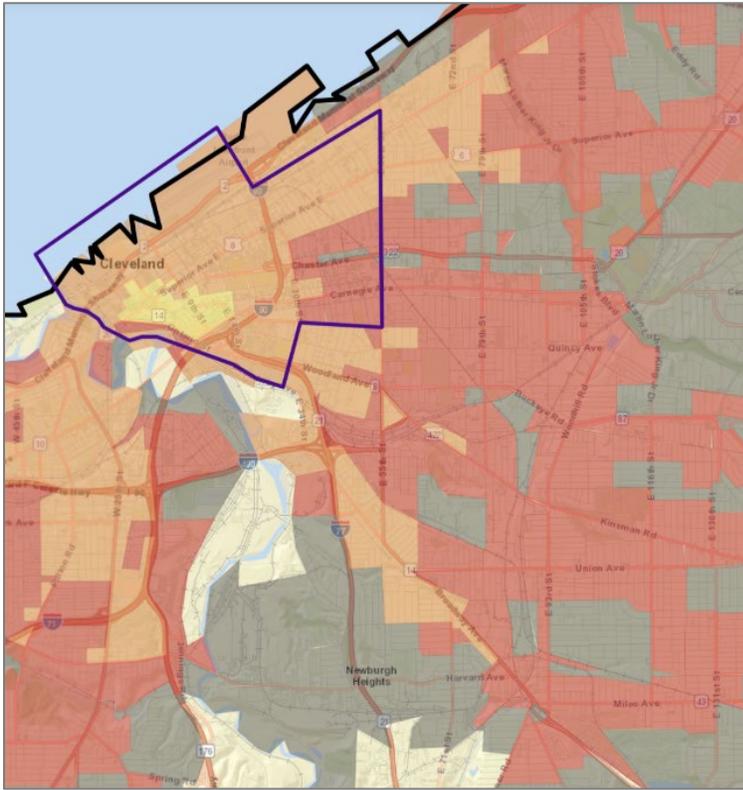


Figure 10 NOACA Transit Time to Downtown Cleveland Job Hub

by transit to Downtown in the project area takes at best between 31-46 minutes as shown orange and often 46-61 minutes as shown in red.²³

Project area residents are exposed to **negative health impacts due to urban heat islands and lack of greenspace**. The project webpage includes urban heat islands mapping modeled by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission in its online Greenprint.²⁴

Solution

SVDC North and MRBA are significant new trails that will serve disadvantaged populations. They will fill current gaps in the broader active transportation network that will **improve access to adjacent trails, transit, and parks, allowing**

residents more opportunities to access work, school, daily activities, and recreation. The census tracts the SVDC North and MRBA are in have high potential bikeway demand and need, as modeled by ODOT as part of its first bicycle and pedestrian plan, *Walk.Bike.Ohio*.²⁵

SVDC North and MRBA are designed to **facilitate connections to the transit network** due to their proximity to existing bus routes (2, 10, 18, and high-frequency 19) along Broadway Avenue and the E. 34th Street Rapid Transit Station with access to all three Rapid lines.²⁶ All GCRTA buses are equipped with bike racks, and bicycles may be brought onboard all trains and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) vehicles, allowing for even greater accessibility.

Broadway Avenue is a near-term priority transit corridor and GCRTA is about to embark on a corridor study of the corridor (ODOT PID 118227) to study land use, zoning and roadway configuration to maximize potential for transit-oriented development. Additional improvements to the corridor will be included in this study, which is the first step in moving towards a Small Starts project for BRT. GCRTA is a member of the RAISE Planning Project Team

²³“Commuting Times at Work Destination Level,” NOACA ArcGIS Web Application, accessed February 25, 2024, <https://workforce.noaca.org/>. Note: Screenshots are available on project application webpage.

²⁴“Greenprint Explorer.”

²⁵“Active Transportation Map Viewer: Bikeway Demand and Need,” ODOT TIMS ArcGIS Web Application, accessed February 23, 2024, <https://gis.dot.state.oh.us/tims/Map/ActiveTransportation>. Note: Screenshots are available on project application webpage.

²⁶“System Map,” GCRTA Web Application, accessed February 25, 2024, <https://www.riderta.com/systemmap>.

and Cleveland Metroparks has served as a stakeholder over the last decade on the transit authority’s similar W. 25th Street MetroHealth BRT project.

The presence and **proximity of trails and parkland improves human health and provides real economic benefits**. Trees and other plantings used as part of the Complete Streets process help mitigate urban heat islands. Access to active transportation and recreation space can increase physical activity; however, these benefits accrue to only those who can access the facilities. A 2018 study found that 114,000 adults in Cuyahoga County have improved health through utilization of Cleveland Metroparks trails and parks, resulting in medical cost savings of \$160 million annually.²⁷ The project provides the opportunity for residents and workers to enjoy an outdoor experience any day of the year. According to the *Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks*, residents of Cuyahoga County receive \$64.6 million in direct recreational use of Cleveland Metroparks trails and parks.²⁸

Many of our enrollees live in the neighborhoods that will be favorably impacted by the construction of these trails. This proposed infrastructure enhancement will encourage exercise with positive physical and mental health benefits. We all recognize the need to identify and address the social determinants of health. This project will positively impact transportation, housing, employment opportunities and so many other important factors that plague historically disadvantaged communities. - Greg Young, DPM, VP, Government Relations at Medical Mutual

Mobility and Community Connectivity

Challenge

The current trail and bikeway network has a **lack of systemwide connectivity**. SVDC North and MRBA are missing links inhibiting users from accessing existing low LTS facilities. These trails are also important segments to connect users to transit service along the Broadway Avenue corridor and to the city’s micromobility network.

Data summaries from the USDOT Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer listing Overall Disadvantaged Component Percentile Scores for the SVDC North and MRBA census tracts are shown in

Table 4. USDOT ETC Explorer Disadvantaged Areas

Overall Disadvantage Component Scores - Percentile Ranked	Component 1: SVDC North	Component 2: MRBA
Climate & Disaster Risk Burden	90%	74%
Environmental Burden	99%	99%
Health Vulnerability	99%	50%
Social Vulnerability	93%	79%
Transportation Insecurity	50%	37%

Table 4.²⁹ The project areas both face significant social and economic challenges, including low income, which can result in **barriers to access and affordability**.

²⁷ The Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks (Boston: The Trust for Public Land, September 2018), 7.

²⁸ Ibid., 7.

²⁹ “US DOT Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer,” USDOT ArcGIS Web Application, accessed February 14, 2024, <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/0920984aa80a4362b8778d779b090723/page/Homepage/>. Note: Screenshots are available on project application webpage.

Solution

The *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan* is the culmination of regional collaboration, route identification, technical evaluation, and nearly three years of community and stakeholder engagement. More than 800 miles of candidate routes were identified in the overall framework and distilled it into 69 projects, (242.5 miles) divided into three categories:

- Critical Gaps: 12 projects totaling 13.5 miles
- Regional Links: 27 projects totaling 122 miles
- Key Supporting Routes: 30 projects totaling 107 miles

A detailed, interactive map of all the plan priorities is available at www.cuyahogagreenways.com.

In 2021, leadership of the CGP looked at filling Critical Gaps and Regional Links in the Cuyahoga Greenways Plan and identified the projects most in need for advancement and most responsive to the goals of the RAISE grant opportunity, resulting in Cleveland Metroparks' 2021 RAISE Planning application that is funding engineering and design of SVDC North and MRBA. Throughout the course of design of the SVDC North and MRBA, extensive public engagement has been conducted in partnership with Community Development Corporations to ensure the trails best serve the needs and desires of the local neighborhoods.

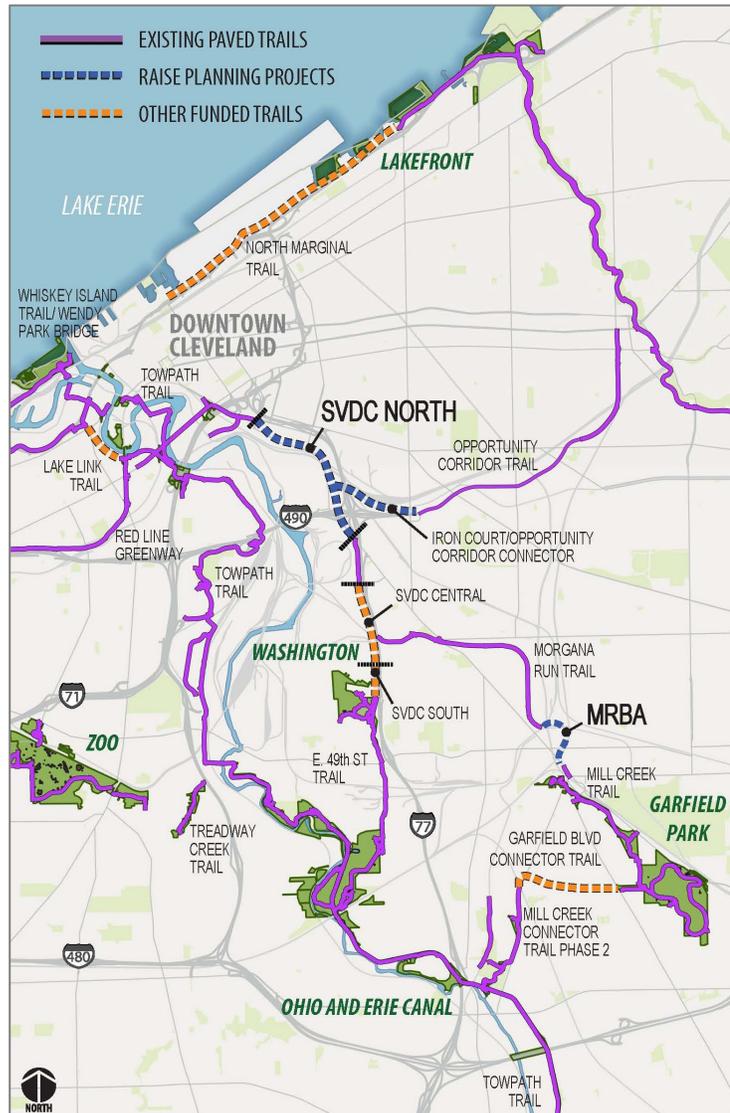


Figure 11. SVDC North and MRBA Trail Connections

Construction of SVDC North and MRBA will improve **access to trails, transit, and micromobility** options³⁰ that are available in the city, including e-scooter and e-bike share platforms. They will connect to major trail projects recently completed or being undertaken (see Figure 11). The various phases of the SVDC will provide access along the east side of the Cuyahoga River, much like how the west side

³⁰ Micromobility through e-scooter and e-bike sharing platforms is available in the city of Cleveland around the project area. See <https://planning.clevelandohio.gov/dockless/index.php> for more information.

benefits from the Towpath Trail. The SVDC sections aside from SVDC North are either built or have funding dedicated and are under design.

Complete Streets design concepts will be used to improve safety and comfort of active transportation users. These physical infrastructure changes are expected to increase bicycle ridership. *Improving Safety for Pedestrians and Bicyclists Accessing Transit* notes that “Bicyclist facilities that are designed to reduce level of traffic stress and serve the broadest population of rider— through vehicle speed regulation and separation from traffic— have been shown to increase cycling rates by 5 to 15 percent (Schultheiss et al., 2019).”³¹

Access for all, including a commitment for individuals with disabilities, is central to the work of Cleveland Metroparks. Equitable access is an undergirding element in Cleveland Metroparks’ System Plan. The Park District also recently updated its “Dignity and Respect for All: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Policy” affirming these efforts in the agency’s work.³² SVDC North and MRBA will be built to Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) standards to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access. Cleveland Metroparks strives to follow relevant best practices and complies with or exceeds the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) in design of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and Ohio’s Multimodal Design Guide.

The Cleveland Metropark’s RAISE grant program aligns with the Cleveland Guardians purpose and beliefs to unite and inspire our city with the power of team. The new shared-use trails will create a connection throughout our community that will benefit our staff, fans and stakeholders alike. - Paul Dolan, Chairman and CEO of the Cleveland Guardians Major League Baseball Team

Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity

Challenge

The Broadway-Slavic Village and Union-Miles neighborhoods have experienced decades of disinvestment, resulting in a **lack of economic growth**. There are many **underutilized and vacant properties** as well as a lack of greenspace limiting the attractiveness of the area. Absence of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is also a barrier at the individual level to access to safe, low-cost, and reliable transportation to work or school that is a key component of one’s economic mobility, or ability to advance up the economic ladder.

Solution

The RAISE Planning project team includes community development corporations that are working every day at the neighborhood level to implement plans to bring uplift and opportunity. Slavic Village Development and Union-Miles Development Corporation are both experts in economic and community development and lead housing and redevelopment initiatives for the project neighborhoods.

³¹ *Improving Safety for Pedestrians and Bicyclists Accessing Transit*, 54-55.

³² Visit <https://www.clevelandmetroparks.com/about/cleveland-metroparks-organization/policies-procedures/board-policies> to review this policy.

SVDC North and MRBA will improve personal mobility by providing access to employment centers, transit, parks, and the wider trail network. The project helps fulfill **complementary economic development initiatives** including one of the key goals under “economy” in *Reimagining Downtown Cleveland*, developed by the City of Cleveland and Downtown Cleveland Alliance (DCA), in partnership with Cuyahoga County, Destination Cleveland and Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP). This outlined a vision for the next five years to “build a comprehensive network of protected bike infrastructure connecting Downtown district and surrounding neighborhoods.”³³ This initiative is also consistent with NOACA’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, which lists as a strategy to “Support Complete and Green Streets, and active transportation connections, trails, bikeways across all municipal/jurisdictions.”³⁴

SVDC North and MRBA can spur on investment through **redevelopment of vacant or underutilized sites and Brownfields**, of which there are many in the project area. Recent construction of the Red Line Greenway as part of the 2016 Re-Connecting Cleveland TIGER grant has helped lead to in-fill development on vacant parcels around the trail. CDC participation is crucial to ensure that redevelopments fit the needs and desires of the surrounding community.

Federal investment in trail networks in northeast Ohio has already produced significant spin-off development. A 2011 study of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail by Cleveland State University demonstrated that \$6.6 million in federal funds for the trail and associated projects leveraged over \$27.6 million in non-federal investment.³⁵ Additionally, infrastructure investment like the SVDC North and MRBA produce good-paying construction jobs at Prevailing Wages. The project will also have a Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) participation goal.

Proximity of residential housing to Cleveland Metroparks properties and trails has been demonstrated through *The Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks* to add a minimum of a 5% premium to the market value of neighboring properties. Other economic benefits accrue as a result of parks. At least \$873 million of annual benefits are contributed to Cuyahoga County from Cleveland Metroparks, including an overall increase of \$155 million in value of neighboring properties.³⁶

As president of Cleveland State University, a regional university with a strong access mission, it is especially important to me that we complete this Slavic Village Downtown Connector because it will enable opportunities for so many families who have been too long limited in their ability to help drive the economy of Cleveland because of

³³ “Reimagining Downtown Cleveland,” City of Cleveland, June 6, 2023, accessed 2/14/24, <https://mayor.clevelandohio.gov/reimaginingdowntowncleveland>, 5.

³⁴ NOACA Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2023-2028, NOACA, accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.noaca.org/regional-planning/major-planning-documents/economic-development>, 108.

³⁵ *Ohio & Erie Canalway: Connectivity, Community, Culture*, Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University, 2011, <http://npshistory.com/publications/nha/ohio-erie-canalway/connectivity-community-culture.pdf>, 14.

³⁶ The Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks, 7.

infrastructure that fails to meet their needs. - Dr. Laura Bloomberg, President of Cleveland State University

State of Good Repair

Challenge

The **existing roadway network is outdated** and does not provide adequate bicycle and pedestrian transportation options. Conditions of sidewalks are generally poor and there is not yet a continuous trail network. Many users do not feel comfortable using bike lanes on urban arterials, which tend to have high bicycle and pedestrian crash rates.

Unconnected trails are harder to maintain because they require separate trips by maintenance staff and often do not have the same level of usership.

Solution

The SVDC North and MRBA will **utilize existing public right-of-way to create Complete Streets** by installing a trail in space gained by removing redundant vehicle cartway. Vulnerable road users are protected by this separate facility, which is expected to significantly reduce pedestrian and bicycle crashes.

The SVDC and MRBA are being designed in partnership with the City of Cleveland to ensure that all users, vehicular and active, are well served by the modernized corridors. New curbing, drainage, and upgraded or new traffic signals, along with amenities like street trees and plantings, are also included as part of the transformation to Complete Streets. **Cleveland Metroparks will manage and maintain the new trails** while the City of Cleveland will retain the underlying ownership of the right-of-way much like the management agreement for the Towpath Trail. The Park District operates parks near the SVDC North and MRBA and already has the necessary staffing and equipment to maintain these new trails.

Cleveland Metroparks has extensive experience in providing management of more than 125 miles of paved shared-use paths in the Park District's more than 25,000 acres. The Park District is well recognized for its high-quality park maintenance and received the National Gold Medal Award for "Excellence in Park and Recreation Administration" in 1999, 2001, 2007, 2016, and 2021.

The new routes will greatly improve health and access for our community. We are raising our family and building a business in the Slavic Village Fleet and Broadway areas. We have witnessed first-hand the positive and powerful impact of infrastructure dollars spent for projects in our Community. These dollars go to address the need for greater connectivity within the fabric of some of Cleveland's more impoverished areas. - Tiffany Andreoli, Owner of Andreoli Restoration, LLC

Partnership and Collaboration

Challenge

Transportation projects are often developed without meaningful participation from community groups and members of the public, especially in underserved areas.

Solution

The 2021 RAISE Planning award is being used to fund development of the SVDC North and MRBA concepts through full design and engineering to construction documents. To guide the RAISE Planning project, a **diverse project team** that meets bi-weekly was brought together that includes the design consultant team of Chagrin Valley Engineering and SmithGroup, Cleveland Metroparks, City of Cleveland (staff from City Planning Commission and the Mayor’s Office of Capital Projects), Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, Slavic Village Development (SVD), and Union Miles Development Corporation (UMDC).

The MRBA project also benefits from continued support by the National Park Service - Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program (NPS-RTCA). UMDC applied for and was awarded technical assistance support from the program in 2019 to advance planning and community support for the MRBA. The effort kicked off in January 2020, and while the intensive public engagement planned for this effort was hampered by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, a stakeholder team including NPS, UMDC, SVD, Bike Cleveland, The Trust for Public Land, Cleveland Neighborhood Progress, Western Reserve Land Conservancy, City of Cleveland, and Cleveland Metroparks continued to build local, grassroots support for the MRBA through socially distanced walking tours, site cleanups, and regular meetings. The efforts of this group helped spur inclusion of the MRBA as one of the four projects in the RAISE Planning bundle, and the group continues to meet monthly to help assist engagement around the RAISE Planning grant.

The **extensive public engagement process and involvement of community development corporations** (CDCs) is consistent with strategies listed in USDOT’s *Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making*.³⁷ Cleveland has a history of strong community development corporations, which act as conduits between block clubs they help organize, neighborhood initiatives, and City Councilmembers. SVD and UMDC have long track records of advancing neighborhood revitalization projects. Their expertise on the project team is invaluable to “connect the dots” between the SVDC North and MRBA and other complementary projects. SVD is a co-recipient of FY 2022 Thriving Communities Program grant specifically assisting with advancing the overall SVDC and MRBA, along with other projects.

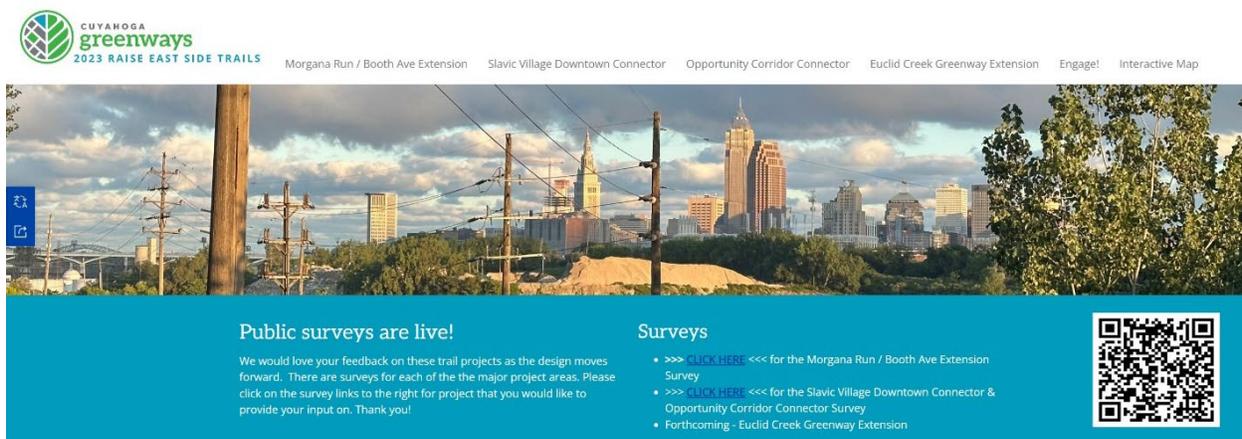
Below is a summary of some of the methods the project team used to try to reach as many members of the community as possible.³⁸ See the public engagement summaries in the SVDC North and MRBA feasibility studies for more.

- Meetings and Events: Tabling at large and small community events; presentations at block clubs and smaller community meetings; briefings with City Council Members; two rounds of large public meetings; community bicycle rides and tours

³⁷ *Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making*, USDOT, Updated November 2023, accessed February 23, 2024, <https://www.transportation.gov/priorities/equity/promising-practices-meaningful-public-involvement-transportation-decision-making>, 9-10.

³⁸ This broad-based approach is consistent with *Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making*.

- Website, Email, and Media: Development of a RAISE Planning website (2023raise.cuyahogagreenways.org) with translations services, online surveys, presentations, mapping, and bird’s eye aerial flyovers of the routes; coverage in online newsletters; regional and local newspaper online and printed articles; emails to stakeholders; social media pushes to direct people to the meetings, website, and surveys
- Direct Outreach: 45 yard signs were placed throughout the neighborhoods with a QR code and URL to the project website along with a telephone contact; paper surveys and collection boxes were placed at the local library and recreation center; and direct door-to-door delivery of project flyers with surveys were dropped at more than 800 residences in the immediate SVDC North and MRBA project areas.



The more than 35 letters of support received show broad support (see Attachment 11).

This collaborative effort presents an invaluable opportunity for both our organization and the community we serve. By extending the trail, we can enhance access to green spaces, promote active lifestyles, and foster a stronger sense of community connectivity. Additionally, the trail extension aligns with our shared mission of improving the quality of life within the Union Miles neighborhood by providing residents with safe and accessible recreational opportunities. - Roshawn Sample, Executive Director of Union Miles Development Corporation

Innovation

Challenge

Many **transportation signals in the city of Cleveland are outmoded** and were designed for roadways where automobiles were the only users. Additional uses like for bus-only lanes or bicyclists require optimization to the signal network.

Cleveland Metroparks has an **expanding network of trails and park areas to manage and monitor** for changes in condition that requires new ways of performing inspections and asset management.

Many of the Critical Gaps and Regional Links in the Cuyahoga Greenways Plan including the **SVDC North and MRBA are complicated and costly to build**. These trails are often located in highly urbanized and constrained areas and require the resources and talents of multiple partners.

Solution

The City of Cleveland received a FY 2022 \$1.8 million Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) grant to **prototype smart signals and innovative technologies** that can provide emergency vehicle preemption, transit prioritization, bicycle and pedestrian detection, and video-based safety analysis and close call detection. While the Broadway Avenue corridor is not one of the SMART pilot corridors, lessons learned from this project can be put to use as part of the signal replacement or refurbishments planned as part of the SVDC North and MRBA and incorporated into the remainder of the design. Additionally, the City also received a \$2.3 million Safe Streets and Roads for All grant in December 2023 that will be used to fund safety improvements from its *Vision Zero Plan*.

Cleveland Metroparks has a robust **drone program to assist with monitoring natural resources and infrastructure, especially bridges**. With improvements to several bridges planned as part of the SVDC North and MRBA, drones will perform some of the regular inspections. Additionally, they will be used to monitor construction of the trails as part of a time-lapse that will be posted online.

Ohio is a state with **Innovative Project Delivery with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) delegation authority vested in ODOT**. This arrangement allows for accelerated reviews and coordination that is benefiting the SVDC North and MRBA as they progress through design.

Cleveland Metroparks and City of Cleveland partnership and collaboration on the RAISE project builds on the highly successful model employed to develop the Towpath Trail on the west side of the Cuyahoga River in the city of Cleveland. Cleveland Metroparks, the City, and partners worked together to design and construct this three-phase project totaling more than \$50 million that opened in 2021. Like the Towpath Trail, a project development agreement and long-term lease and management agreement will enable rights to construct and manage the SVDC North and MRBA, whereby the City of Cleveland will grant Cleveland Metroparks real estate interests over the portions of the public rights-of-way and several City-owned parcels while the City maintains ownership. Cleveland Metroparks has numerous long-term lease and management agreements in place with the City, including a 99-year lease established in 2013 to manage Cleveland's lakefront parks.

Our RAISE projects will help Cleveland advance planning initiatives such as 15 Minute Cities, Vision Zero Cleveland, Complete & Green Streets and the Cleveland Climate Action Plan. These are important goals that my administration is committed to seeing through to ensure Cleveland is fully embracing its opportunity to make neighborhoods safer, healthier and economically stronger in a way that embraces a climate-friendly, active transportation-focused, resident-centered approach. - Justin Bibb, Mayor of the City of Cleveland

IV. Project Readiness

Cleveland Metroparks continues to progress the Slavic Village Downtown Connector Phase 2 North (SVDC North) and Morgana Run Booth Avenue Extension (MRBA) projects through design and engineering under the 2021 *RAISE Cleveland Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning Project* (“RAISE Planning”) award. Extremely comprehensive feasibility studies were completed in February 2024, Stage 1 plans will be submitted in July 2024, environmental clearance will occur prior to the end of 2024, and completion and approval of final design will occur by June 2025.

Project Schedule

If awarded construction funding through this RAISE application, it is assumed it will take approximately one year for the grant agreement to be executed, which aligns with completion of the RAISE Planning project. Bidding and contracting for a construction contractor would then occur in the third quarter of 2025, with construction to conclude in spring 2027, as shown in Table 5. This timeline is well in advance of the obligation deadline of September 30, 2028.

Table 5. Project Schedule

Calendar Year	2024				2025				2026				2027			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
RAISE Cleveland Planning - SVDC North & MRBA Design																
<i>Preliminary Engineering/Feasibility</i>	■															
<i>Environmental Engineering/ROW Plans</i>	■	■	■													
<i>NEPA Clearance/CE Document</i>		■	■	■												
<i>Final Design/ROW</i>					■	■	■									
<i>Final Design Approval</i>						■										
RAISE Cleveland East Side Trails																
Application	■															
Award Notification		■														
Grant Agreement Processing			■	■	■	■										
Bidding/Contracting							■									
Construction SVDC North								■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Construction MRBA								■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Closeout															■	■

Coordination and Engagement

The conceptual planning for the SVDC North and MRBA projects were developed and refined through public and stakeholder engagement over the last two decades, with significant engagement through the 2019 *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan*, Cleveland Metroparks’ Reservation Planning, City of Cleveland Complete and Green Streets, and other planning efforts.

A cornerstone of the RAISE Planning project, which as a low-level Categorical Exclusion designated project would have only been required to advertise and post a 30-day public comment period, has been meaningful public and stakeholder engagement. While previous planning efforts provided the basis for the SVDC North and MRBA projects, extensive outreach was conducted over the prior six months to develop the preferred alignments and features for

these projects, and to ensure that they were designed with involvement and input from residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Please see the Partnership and Collaboration criterion in the Merit Criteria file and the project application webpage (www.clevelandmetroparks.com/RAISEplanning) to view the SVDC North and MRBA feasibility studies that include engagement summaries and a listing and documents of past planning efforts.

Environmental Risk Assessment

Required Approvals

NEPA Status

The SVDC North and MRBA have a low-level Categorical Exclusion (CE) designation (C2 in Ohio) as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process, requiring a minimal level of documentation. As noted above, feasibility studies were recently completed and environmental documentation on the preferred alignments is underway. These include reviews of regulated materials and cultural and historic resources. Cleveland Metroparks and the consultant team met with Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) on January 29, 2024 to discuss the CE and refine the overall project schedule, and CE clearance is anticipated prior to the end of 2024.

Federal and State Reviews

The SVDC and MRBA projects utilize existing publicly owned land or public right-of-way in highly impacted urban environments and have limited interaction with resources. Both projects utilize road diets to calm traffic and create space to establish reimaged Complete and Green Streets.

Consultation with all appropriate Federal and State agencies is underway as part of the Categorical Exclusion process and documentation will be included in ODOT's EnviroNet online system. The substantial feasibility studies for the projects are located on the project application webpage and include additional background and environmental reviews that have occurred to date. The only Section 4(f) land impacted by MRBA is already in the control of Cleveland Metroparks, the project sponsor.

An anticipated environmental commitment is related to being in the habitat ranges of the federally listed and protected Indiana Bat and Northern Long-Eared Bat, which will restrict the limited tree clearing that will be necessary to between October 1 and March 31. While adjacent to National Register of Historic Places listed Miles Park Historic District, the MRBA does not disturb this area, though a project goal is to help bring visibility and improved conditions that will benefit the district.³⁹

Comments thus far through the extensive public engagement highlighted above led to refinements of the SVDC North route and the Iron Court/Opportunity Corridor Connector (ICOC), which goes through feasibility study as part of the RAISE Planning grant. The dual

³⁹ See the application to the National Register of Historic Places for the Miles Park Historic District and pages 10-13 in the Union Miles Neighborhood Master Plan (2004) on the project application webpage.

desires expressed for both direct, highly visible routes and more natural greenway options like the West Side’s Red Line Greenway were accommodated through pursuing the Broadway Avenue alignment and road diet for SVDC North and the GCRTA rail corridor from E. 55th Street to a convergence with the SVDC at Broadway Avenue. Further, this feedback was worked through MRBA to provide for more of a greenway approach to Booth Avenue and E. 91st Street.

State and Local Approvals

On February 15, 2024, the Board of Park Commissioners of Cleveland Metropolitan Park District (“Cleveland Metroparks”) passed a resolution authorizing submittal of a RAISE application for this project. The resolution enables Cleveland Metroparks’ Chief Executive Officer to enter into grant agreements and necessary documents to accept the grant award. Furthermore, Cleveland Metroparks will make funds available as needed until reimbursement from the RAISE program. The resolution is provided in Attachment 6. No additional legislative approvals are required for Cleveland Metroparks.

Prior to completion of the RAISE Planning project, the results will be presented to the Cleveland City Planning Commission and the Transportation & Mobility Committee of Cleveland City Council. The City of Cleveland has been a committed partner throughout the RAISE Planning project and Councilmembers and the administration are regularly briefed on the project.

The project, called “East Side RAISE Trails” listed in the construction phase for \$20 million, is in process of being added to the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), having moved through the region’s metropolitan planning organization, the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency’s (NOACA), various advisory councils and committees over the past several months. It is slated for amendment to the LRTP at the March 8, 2024 meeting of the NOACA Board of Directors.⁴⁰ Upon notice of award of funding for the RAISE Cleveland East Side Trails Project, Cleveland Metroparks will pursue addition of the project to the (TIP/STIP). Note that as a policy NOACA will not amend projects to its four-year, fiscally constrained TIP until funding commitments are received; therefore, the RAISE project will be added to the TIP in the quarter following grant award announcements.

Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

The RAISE Planning project and plans for the SVDC North and MRBA are widely supported. The project has a low-level CE designation, minimizing environmental complications for the project. The projects are feasible through road diets to trade excess vehicle cartway for the ability to create Complete and Green Streets with separated trails. Since the projects use publicly owned land (City of Cleveland or ODOT) or public right-of-way, real estate acquisition is limited and will likely include occurrences of temporary construction access along with four parcels where minimal right-of-way will be needed for SVDC North. The project does include some utility relocations, mainly moving poles, which occurs regularly on similar projects and this has been accounted for in the timeline.

⁴⁰ See February 2, 2024 NOACA Executive Committee packet pages 53-68 on the project application webpage.

The MRBA does include interaction through an underpass at Booth Avenue with the Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) running above. The feasibility study shows that the project can be accomplished without property being needed from the railroad. The project team has been coordinating with NS and a preliminary engineering services agreement has been executed with same team at NS and consulting engineer STV that Cleveland Metroparks worked with on the far more complicated TIGER project for the Whiskey Island Trail and Wendy Park Bridge, which included construction of a new bridge over active rail lines.

Technical Capacity Assessment

Cleveland Metroparks, founded in 1917, is a separate political subdivision of the State of Ohio. The Park District encompasses more than 25,000 acres of public parkland in 18 reservations, or park areas, in Cuyahoga County and adjacent counties. It has 900 budgeted full-time equivalent staff and an annual operating and capital budget of \$151 million dollars.⁴¹

Cleveland Metroparks has taken a leading role in planning and developing the trail network throughout the county and maintains 125 miles of paved trails. The Park District was deeply engaged as a partner in the countywide *Cuyahoga Greenways Plan* and is committed to expanding this network as a means for residents to access Cleveland Metroparks reservations and to enable active transportation.

Federal Funding & Federal Regulations Experience

Cleveland Metroparks has experience in building complex, regionally significant trail projects, many of which have received federal funding through the Congestion Management and Air Quality improvement program or Surface Transportation Block Grant/Transportation Alternatives program. In 2016, Cleveland Metroparks received a \$7,950,000 TIGER VIII award to design and construct four trails and a new bridge in the city of Cleveland. Two of the trails opened in 2019 and the remaining projects opened in 2021. With this experience, Cleveland Metroparks is uniquely qualified to lead the design process for the RAISE Cleveland East Side Trails project.

Cleveland Metroparks is approved by ODOT as a local public agency to let projects. The Park District submits documentation demonstrating its ability to deliver projects in compliance with all relevant federal regulations, including Title VI/Civil Rights. Cleveland Metroparks has in-house real estate, legal, and financial staff and has regularly received federal funding from multiple agencies, including USDOT. The Finance Department has received the following awards: Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) award of Distinguished Budget Presentation; Ohio Auditor of State Award with Distinction for Excellence in Financial Reporting and Highest Achievement in Open and Transparent Government; and 2023 Achievement of Excellence Award in Procurement from the National Institute of Public Procurement (NPI).

⁴¹ "2023 Budget," Cleveland Metroparks, March 2023, https://special_district-cleveland-metroparks-oh-budget-book.cleargov.com/8001Protected-1.pdf.ashx, accessed February 18, 2024, 15, 124.

Project Planning & Delivery

Cleveland Metroparks coordinates regularly with NOACA and has experience programming projects onto the TIP/STIP through the MPO planning process.

Cleveland Metroparks is highly valued and supported by the community, and in 2022 passed a 10-year property tax levy (2.7-mill replacement) in Cuyahoga County and Hinckley Township in Medina County with nearly 77% of the vote. The Park District is debt-free, with no capital obligations or unfunded liabilities.

Cleveland Metroparks has the financial strength and experience to effectively manage and implement this RAISE project. The Park District has a long history and solid reputation for administration of grants across the spectrum of federal, state, and private sources, including Federal-aid trail projects in full compliance with NEPA and other federal requirements. Cleveland Metroparks regularly develops, bids, and manages multi-million-dollar construction projects using a professional staff of civil engineers, landscape architects, architects, surveyors, GIS specialists, and planners.

A December 2023 Cleveland.com article highlighted 19 of the most notable projects underway through 2026 with funding of more than \$74 million for current design or construction phases, including the RAISE Planning project.⁴²

Support for RAISE Cleveland East Side Trails

The RAISE Cleveland East Side Trails project is highly supported by governmental entities, local businesses, community groups, and agencies, including the legislators, partners, and stakeholders listed below. More than 35 letters of support and commitment appear in Attachment 11.

- US Representative, 11th District, Shontel Brown
- Cuyahoga County Executive Chris Ronayne
- Cuyahoga County Council President Pernel Jones, Jr.
- City of Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb
- Cleveland City Council President Blaine A. Griffin
- Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)
- Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority
- Cuyahoga County Planning Commission
- Slavic Village Development Corporation
- Union Miles Development Corporation

⁴² Steven Litt, "Cleveland Metroparks Adds Gems to Emerald Necklace by Leveraging Big Grants, Partnerships," Cleveland.com, December 17, 2023, <https://www.cleveland.com/news/2023/12/cleveland-metroparks-adds-gems-to-emerald-necklace-by-leveraging-big-grants-partnerships.html>.