



Severance Circle Project



Pedestrian and Bicycle
Information Center

Problem

Severance Circle surrounded a high-use commercial development and had little accommodation for pedestrians and bicyclists, often forcing them into vehicular lanes. Pedestrians forged cut-throughs at the risk of personal harm.

Background

Despite being located in a vital suburb of Cleveland with over 100 acres of parkland, the 40-year old Severance Circle was unfriendly to pedestrian and bicycle use. Originally built as a ring road enclosing a shopping mall, no attention was given to connecting the housing, offices, and shopping located there. The Canyon Johnson Urban Fund purchased the since redeveloped center in 2002. It agreed to dedicate Severance Circle as a public street and to build a complete sidewalk system. Funds were set aside by the buyer, the seller, and the City for road and sidewalk improvements.



A pedestrian crosses at a newly signaled crosswalk.

Solution

Recognizing the appropriate changes to be made, The Department of Planning and Development issued ambitious goals:

1. To create safe, convenient sidewalks connecting the commercial district internally and to neighboring residential areas
2. To calm traffic on Severance Circle
3. To create safe bicycle routes through Severance Town center to increase bicycle travel



A bike lane striped for the project.

A variety of measures were implemented to achieve these goals. Benches and bus shelters were provided, building facades were required to abut the sidewalk and provide storefront displays, pedestrian activated walk signals were added to the busiest intersections and at mid-block crossings, and light poles, shade trees, and awnings were installed. One of the more significant construction projects involved converting the 4-lane road into two-lanes with a center left-turn lane and bike lanes on either side. Hazardous drainage grates were also eliminated from the roadway to improve bicyclist safety. As an added measure, enforcement of speeding and other dangerous driving was stepped up, and numerous tickets were issued.

Funding for the project came from the Severance Ring Road Improvement Notes Series 2003 (\$2,741,474) and from a Community Development Block Grant (\$425,000). Costs totaled \$3,166,474.

Results

Completed in 2003, the \$3.6 million project had formed a complete and connected sidewalk system, installed common spaces, benches, bus shelter, pedestrian-scaled lights, trees, and other landscaping. Dedicated bicycle lanes

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were added and the four-lane road was reconfigured. During the 2003 holiday shopping rush, vehicular traffic moved without significant delay without speeding. The new sidewalks and crosswalks were also used by pedestrians.

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Images Source

*Institute of Transportation Engineers Pedestrian Project Award Application.
Cleveland Heights, Department of Planning and Development.
<http://www.ite.org/awards/pedproject/SeveranceCircle.pdf>*

