

**For Immediate Release  
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## **Mayor, City Council, Business And Neighborhood Leaders Celebrate Completed Morse Road Improvement Project**

Mayor Michael B. Coleman, City Council President Pro-Tem Hearcel F. Craig and business and neighborhood leaders today marked the completion of the Morse Road improvement project. The project includes resurfacing, new sidewalks and bike lanes and covers 2.9 miles between I-71 and Cleveland Avenue.

**“Our investments are leading to the resurgence of the Morse Road corridor and the entire Northland area,” said Mayor Coleman. “These new sidewalks, bike lanes and other improvements make Morse Road safer for pedestrians and bicyclists, and more attractive for businesses that are helping to revive this neighborhood.”**

Morse Road and Northland area businesses are key partners in the project and keeping the right-of-way beautiful. Businesses that are members of the Morse Road Special Improvement District assess themselves to cover costs of some grass cutting, weeding, flower plantings, the changing of banners in landscaped medians and other work to beautify the public right-of-way along Morse Road. The city also works closely with the Northland Alliance, created by Northland area businesses and residents.

**“City leaders are investing in Northland because the residents and business leaders here are partners in the economic growth that is occurring along Morse Road,” said Councilmember Craig, chair of the Minority and Business Development Committee. “I hope this momentum can be carried forward for years to come.”**

Completion of the Morse Road project comes on the heels of the May 24 groundbreaking for the Columbus area's first Menards store on Morse Road. The Morse Road and Menards projects and additional redevelopment of the Northland Village site will result in a combined investment of more than \$49.3 million by the City of Columbus in Morse Road between I-71 and Cleveland Avenue. The Menards store and other Northland Village redevelopment will generate 800 jobs onsite in addition to the more than 1,000 jobs already at the Ohio Department of Taxation.

**“The completion of the Morse Road improvement project couldn't be better timed because it coincides with renewed development activity at Northland Village,” said Dave Paul, president of the Northland Community Council. “This portion of Morse Road is now one of Columbus' first Complete Streets, and these improvements will bring new jobs and private investment to Northland.”**

- ◆ Project boundaries and construction schedule:
  - Morse Road Project, Phase 1: Indianola Avenue to Karl Road (1.4 miles)
    - Start: April 29, 2005
    - Completion: May 5, 2008
  - Morse Road Project, Phase 2: Karl Road to Cleveland Avenue (1.5 miles)
    - Start: August 4, 2008
    - Completion: July 7, 2010
  
- ◆ Improvements:
  - Resurfacing
  - New sidewalks for pedestrian safety
    - There were no sidewalks on Morse Road between I-71 and Cleveland Avenue before this project
  - Bike lanes
    - There were no bike lanes on Morse Road before this project
  - New street lights
  - New medians
    - There were no medians on Morse Road between I-71 and Cleveland Avenue before this project
  - Upgrade signals to mast arms
  - Left turns will be limited by new medians, so automobiles will be permitted to make u-turns at designated locations to access drives where the median has blocked direct left turns
    - Morse Road at Evanswood Drive
    - Morse Road at Sandy Lane
    - Morse Road at Maize Road
    - Morse Road at Almont Drive
    - Morse Road at Northland Ridge Boulevard
    - Morse Road at Tamarack Boulevard
    - Morse Road at Heaton Road
    - Morse Road at Malin Street
    - Morse Road at Northtowne Boulevard
  - Improvements at I-71 Interchange
  - Landscaping
  - Storm sewer improvements
  - Painting of railroad bridge between I-71 and Indianola Avenue
  
- ◆ Business Owners: Partners in funding improvements
  - Morse Road Special Improvement District
    - The property owners along Morse Road joined together and assessed themselves to provide services in the SID
    - SID members perform some maintenance activities that the city would not typically perform:
      - Maintaining and switching out the banners in the median
      - Planting flowers
      - Some maintenance activities beyond what the city would typically do (mowing more than four times per year, weeding and other tasks)
  - Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) district

- Created by the non-profit organization Northland Alliance, which Northland area business owners formed
- TIF pays for Morse Road improvements
- TIF funds, once available, will also be used to reimburse the City for projects the City funded before creation of this TIF

◆ Costs: \$29.868 million

• Morse Road, Phase 1*		\$11.1 million
▪ OPWC Assistance	\$3.9 million	
▪ City Bond Funds	\$7.2 million	
• Morse Road, Phase 2*		\$13.2 million
▪ Federal Appropriations	\$2.2 million	
▪ Ohio Public Works Commission	\$4.7 million	
▪ City Bond Funds	\$6.3 million	
• Project design (City funds)		\$3.3 million
• Gateway at I-71 and Morse Road** (City funds)		\$704,000
• I-71 Interchange improvements		\$934,000
▪ ODOT	\$849,000	
▪ City funds	\$85,000	
• Railroad bridge painting#		\$501,726
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$29.868 million</b>

(\* - Costs include right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation, construction and inspection)

(\*\* - Cost includes right-of-way acquisition)

(# - Cost includes design)

◆ City of Columbus investments in Morse Road corridor in recent years:

- Morse Road Improvements Project
  - \$29.868 million
- First Menards store in Columbus area to be built in Northland Village, a 57-acre portion of the old Northland Mall site
  - \$19.4 million on site redevelopment, including acquisition of land, utility improvements and new roads for the redevelopment plan

◆ Jobs generated in the Morse Road Corridor:

- Redevelopment of Northland Village site: 800 jobs
  - Includes 80 Menards' jobs
- These jobs are in addition to the more than 1,000 jobs at the Ohio Department of Taxation building