A photograph of a tree-lined street with a median, cars, and streetlights. The street is paved with asphalt and has a concrete median with a yellow painted curb. There are several cars parked along the side of the road and a few cars driving. The trees are lush green, and there are some pink flowers in the foreground. The sky is bright and clear.

COMPLETING THE CORRIDOR, CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

**An Assessment of Opportunities for Making
the State Route 741 Corridor A Great Place**

July 2007

Report Prepared for Miami Township, City of Miamisburg & Cox Arboretum Foundation

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Assessment

The SR 741 corridor has evolved over the last 30 years into one of the primary activity centers within the Dayton metro area. But, it occurred without a unified vision. Non-auto transportation needs are not being safely addressed and traffic congestion is still a problem. There has been growing awareness that lack of an overall cohesive identity



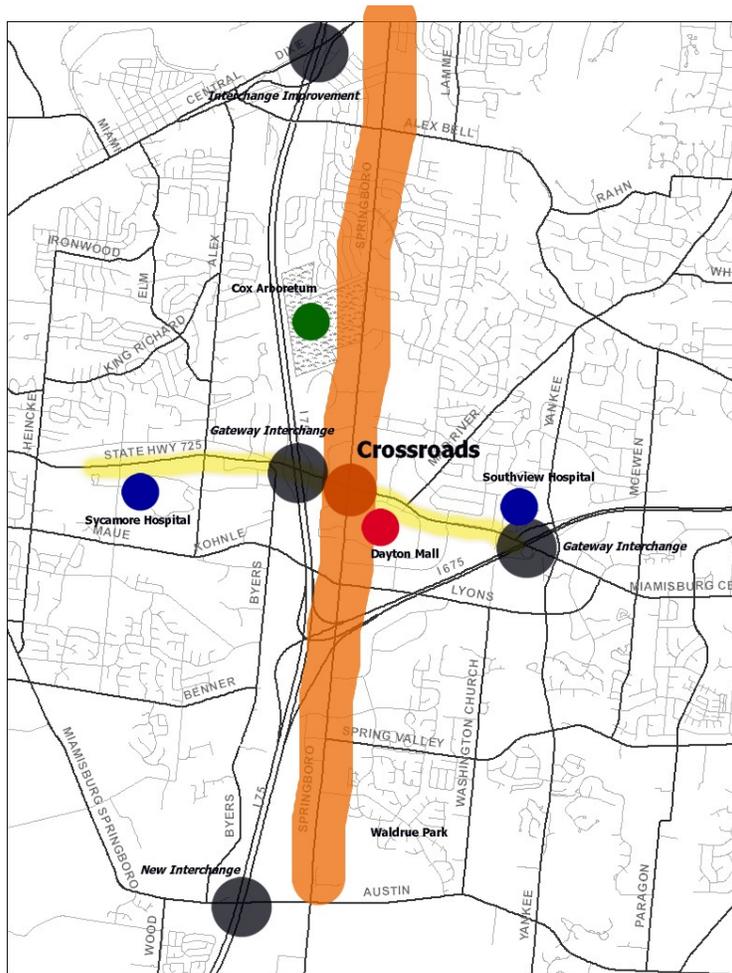
and a weak sense of place have put this corridor in danger of having diminished economic development potential, including the land uses depending upon the corridor for access and identity. This assessment has been conducted to explore what opportunities and constraints lie ahead if a unified plan for corridor improvement were to be undertaken.

A Steering Committee comprised of area stakeholders was formed to oversee the assessment process. The following stakeholders were represented on the Steering Committee:

- Miami Township
- City of Miamisburg
- Cox Arboretum Foundation
- Five Rivers MetroParks
- Miamisburg City School District
- Zengel Construction Company
- Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission
- The Dayton Mall
- Montgomery County
- Ohio Department of Transportation

A series of public meetings were conducted to gather input from area businesses and area residents. The input gathered at the public meetings as well as input offered by the Steering Committee formed the basis for the Assessment Summary Section of this report, including recommendations for improvements and the steps needed to advance the ideas presented in this assessment report.

Study Area



Located in Southern Montgomery County, the SR 741 Corridor is a vital connecting element within one of the five major commercial activity centers in the Dayton metro area. State Route 741 and State Route 725 are the two major arteries upon which this major activity center (currently referred to as “the Dayton Mall area”) depends. While SR 725 provides close and direct highway access to I-75 and I-675, the SR 741 corridor is an important link between three interchange locations along I-75. The northern end of the study area is Alex Bell Road in West Carrollton, which is approximately 2 miles east of an existing partial interchange that is planned for upgrading to a full movement interchange in the future. The existing

interchange at SR 725 is centrally located to the SR 741 study area. The southern end of the study area is Austin where a new interchange will begin construction in 2008.

Not only does the SR 741 Corridor provide a vital parallel route to I-75 connecting these three interchanges but it also connects 7 communities who depend on SR 741 as a major transportation corridor. These communities include:

- Miami Township
- Miamisburg
- West Carrollton
- Moraine
- Springboro
- Centerville
- Washington Township

Background

The Cox Arboretum Foundation is currently developing a long term Master Plan for the Arboretum property. As a result of this effort, many people involved in the process began to show interest in the SR 741 corridor, recognizing that it is the “front door” to the Arboretum. Although the Arboretum Master Plan will include concepts and design proposals for upgrading the appearance of the Arboretum frontage along SR 741, there is a general belief that those efforts would have greater impact if they were undertaken within the context of a larger vision. Under the leadership of the Cox Arboretum Foundation, an initial stakeholder meeting was held to gauge the interest of those having an interest in the corridor to sit down and discuss a potential larger vision for the future of SR 741. Out of that meeting grew the desire to undertake this Assessment Study.

The Steering Committee believes that an environment should be created along the SR 741 Corridor that encourages active living – incorporating more walking and biking in everyday activities. Doing so would provide a positive impact on health care costs for local businesses and residents. It would provide important linkages between businesses and the neighborhoods they serve by allowing residents a safe, inviting environment, in which to walk or ride a bike. It could also have a very positive economic development impact by improving the image of the area through aesthetic improvements, making the Dayton Mall area more competitive with the other retail power centers in the region.

EXISTING AND ALTERNATIVE PEDESTRIAN-BICYCLE ENVIRONMENT ALONG SR 741

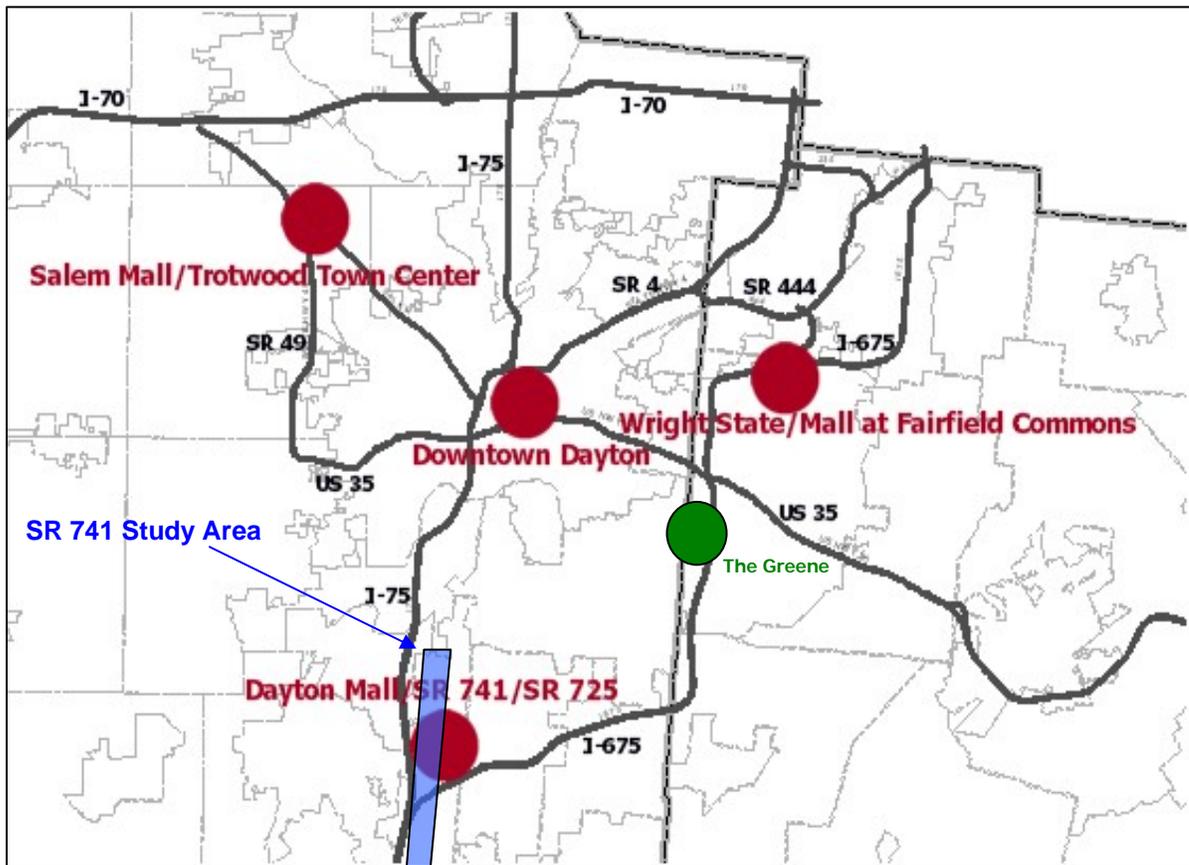


It is important to note that these communities have been down this path before. Each time, the effort fell short when it came time to commit to a plan and find someone to step up in a leadership role. This attempt will follow the path of those previous efforts unless these two needs are fulfilled.

Regional Context

As mentioned previously, the SR 741 corridor is a vital part of one of the 5 major activity centers in the Dayton Metropolitan Region:

- Downtown Dayton
- Wright State/Mall at Fairfield Commons area
- Dayton Mall/SR 741/SR 725 area
- Salem Mall/Trotwood Town Center area
- The Greene shopping complex



The Greene activity center is the newest and is still expanding. Downtown Dayton has experienced a good foundation for renewal, adding entertainment and housing to its employment and retail mix. The Salem Mall/Trotwood Town Center activity center has cycled through a decline and now has a unified vision plan in place for its renewal. The Wright State/Mall at Fairfield Commons is a newer retail center, which draws much of its customers from Wright State University as well as Wright-Patterson Air force Base.

The SR 741 corridor is found within a still-growing part of the region and highway interchange upgrades are in the works to insure it has regional access. However, it could possibly lose many opportunities and sink into disadvantage in competing with the other three activity areas if a vision plan is not developed. Lack of a unified vision plan will also reduce its competitiveness with newer planned developments like The Greene and others likely to occur to the south in Warren County. The unsafe and unpleasant pedestrian and bicycle environment, the pattern of individual non-linked land uses and lack of an overall theme or identity need to be addressed.



The SR 741 Corridor has the potential to be a key regional open space and pedestrian/bike link. State Route 741 provides a potential link between the Great Miami River Corridor Bikeway in West Carrollton, Cox Arboretum, the Germantown-Spring Valley Connector Bikeway along Lyons/Maue Road, Waldruhe Park, and the Austin Pike/River Corridor Bikeway. These three bikeways crossing the corridor all have an east-west orientation. SR 741 would provide a north-south connection between them. Cox Arboretum and Waldruhe Park, both relatively isolated except by auto access at this time, could be more integrally connected to retail and office employees, residential neighborhoods and schools if the SR 741 corridor had safe pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities.

Development Trends

The new Austin Road interchange at the south end of the corridor is approaching reality and a number of landowners in the area are considering major redevelopment initiatives. New infill development, along with redevelopment of already built-up land is continually taking place along the rest of the corridor. The Dayton Mall recently began an upgrade, including a lifestyle center and pedestrian access improvements, in order to remain competitive. Five Rivers MetroParks will be moving forward with a new master plan for Cox Arboretum and the Miamisburg School District is continually looking at ways to make its facilities function more efficiently. Zengel Construction Company continues to implement their plan for the Vienna Estates neighborhood located on the East side of SR 741 which includes plans to connect Vienna Parkway with SR 741. These projects are currently happening independently from one another; however, if

done in the context of a larger vision for the SR 741 corridor, these individual projects could complement each other and begin the transformation of SR 741 into a recognizable “place” within the region. Until then, SR 741 will simply be another commercial corridor in southern Montgomery County with development occurring in a seemingly haphazard manner.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Land Use Patterns

Cox Arboretum, the primary open space facility in the area, is currently looking at developing a new master plan that would explore ways to tie better into surrounding land uses. It is one of a number of major open space facilities in the region available for physical exercise and enjoyment of nature, yet it is virtually inaccessible except by car. School children and residents in adjacent neighborhoods do not have safe access to the facility due to a lack of sidewalks, safe bike connections and safe crossings along SR 741. Providing safer and more convenient connections between Cox Arboretum and nearby residents and schools would encourage more use of the facility. The park has facilities compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Coordination of safe crossings and transit stops would allow better access to the park via transit by people with disabilities.

Transportation Systems

The Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority provides public bus service to portions of State Route 741 and the surrounding streets. RTA route number 61 serves the area south of State Route 725, including the Dayton Mall, Mall Woods Drive, Cub Foods, Met Life, and several apartment communities in Miami Township. RTA route number 19 serves State Route 741 from Alex-Bell Pike to Kingsridge Drive. RTA route number 18 serves a short section of State Route 741 north of Alex-Bell Pike. The South Hub for RTA is located less than a quarter mile to the east of State Route 741 on Lyons Road in Miami Township.



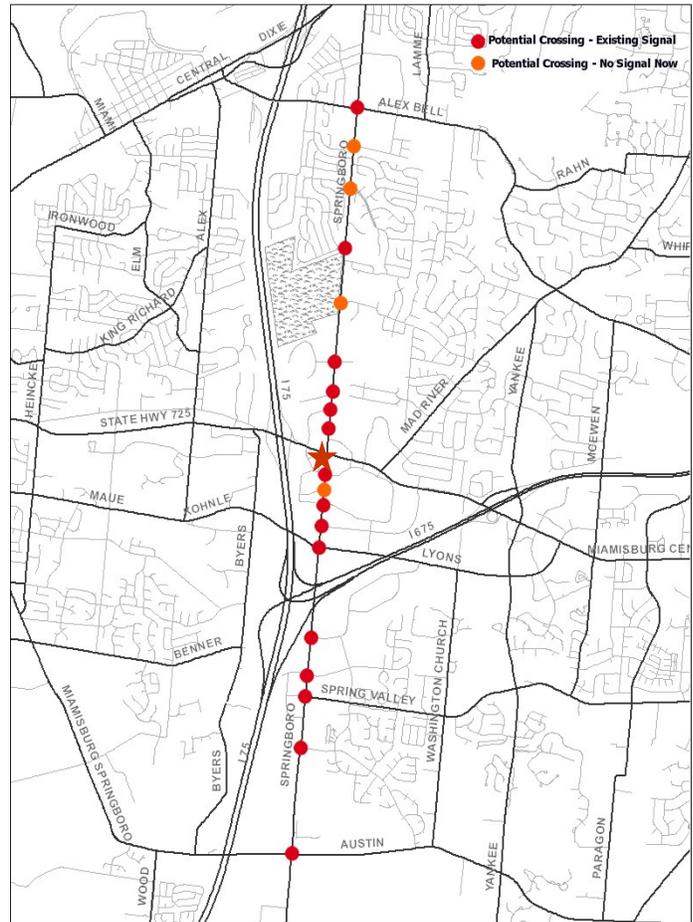
TRANSIT STOP IMPROVEMENT IN ENGLEWOOD, OHIO – BEFORE AND AFTER



The existing bus stops do not include benches or shelters and many locations do not have a concrete pad for transit riders to stand on while waiting for the bus. This has led to areas with overgrown weeds during dry times and muddy waiting areas other times.

Pedestrian / Bicycle Facilities

Pedestrian facilities along State Route 741 are limited to a few push button crossings at several of the signalized intersections and small stretches of sidewalk primarily within the City of Miamisburg. Currently the only crosswalk and push button signal south of Interstate 675 is located at Ferndown Drive. This audible signal was installed several years ago to assist visually impaired individuals working at LexisNexis. North of Interstate 675, the intersections of State Route 741 and Lyons Road and State Route 725 do not have designated crosswalks or push button pedestrian signals. Several crosswalks, some with signals and some without, do exist adjacent to the commercial areas within the City of Miamisburg north of State Route 725 and adjacent to residential areas within Miami Township. No designated bicycle facilities currently exist along State Route 741. A bike route is shown crossing State Route 741 along Lyons Road.



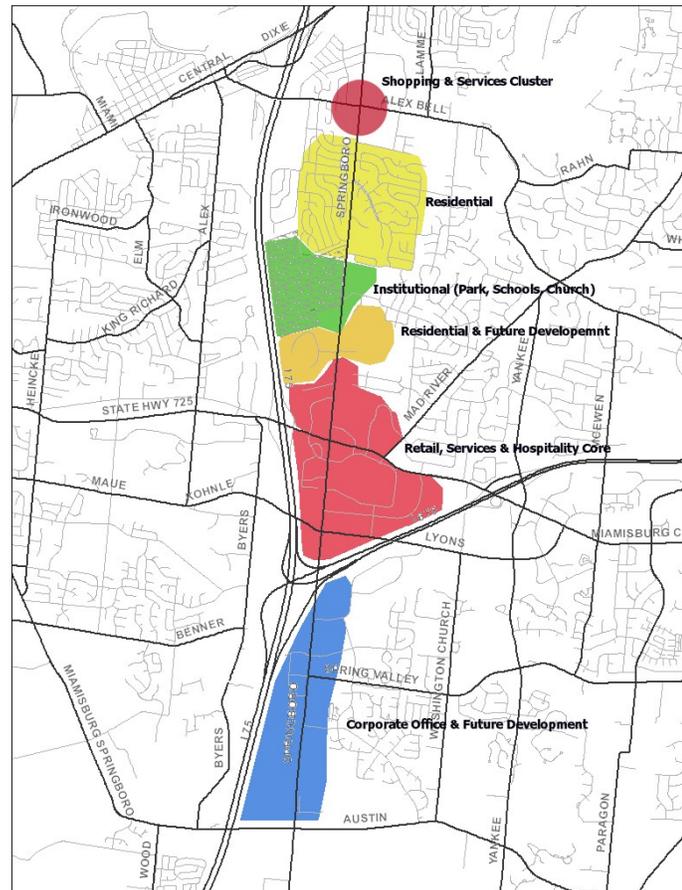
ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Need: To improve the land use linkages along the SR 741 corridor.

Although the SR 741 corridor has been developed over the years without an overall unified concept for land use, a general pattern of grouping has emerged:

- Shopping and services cluster at Alex-Bell Road
- Residential neighborhoods between Orchard Run Road and Silvercliff Drive
- Institutional (park, school and church) area centered around Cox Arboretum
- Residential and future development area between Loffer Court and the Cox Arboretum area
- Retail, hospitality and services core area between Loffer Court and I-675
- Corporate office and future development area south of I-675

LAND USE GROUPINGS IN THE SR 741 CORRIDOR STUDY AREAS



Any vision plan generated as a next step should take this grouping, formalize it and put forth recommendations that promote interconnectivity of the land uses within each grouping and safe access along the corridor between the groupings. Better links for

complementary land uses such as residential-park, residential-school, park-school, hospitality-retail and office-retail should also be focused upon.

Economic Development Opportunities

Need: A more human scale on the SR 741 corridor to assist in economic development efforts.

The existing SR 741 corridor does not currently provide a pleasant human-oriented experience for visitors, employees or transit riders and lost opportunities for economic development may result. Hotel and motel guests become less likely to go to the Dayton Mall or other stores and restaurants in the immediate area because they can't walk there. Employees along the corridor may travel elsewhere for their lunch hour or for after-work shopping if they have to use a car. Businesses in the corridor become less attractive to potential employees who do not have a car if their walk from the transit stop to their job is unpleasant or dangerous.



The American public is becoming more attracted to environments with a visible sense of pedestrian activity. Many of the newer shopping complexes have been designed around a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Employers offering the ability for a worker to walk, bike or use transit, in addition to an attractive environment for a lunch hour stroll, can gain an advantage in their recruitment efforts.

Pedestrian improvements connecting the cluster of hotels along the west side of SR 741 in a safe and pleasant manner to the Dayton Mall should also be encouraged. It would encourage more interaction of the guests with the mall and enhance its economic development potential. One of the visualizations presented during the assessment meetings is shown below. It shows how utilizing the underused space at the west end of the Dayton Mall could promote economic development and provide a more pleasant environment for walking and bicycling.

SR 741 FRONTAGE ALONG DAYTON MALL PROPERTY - EXISTING



SR 741 FRONTAGE ALONG DAYTON MALL PROPERTY - POTENTIAL



Complete Street Concept

Need: To remain competitive by transforming the SR 741 Corridor following the "complete street" concept.

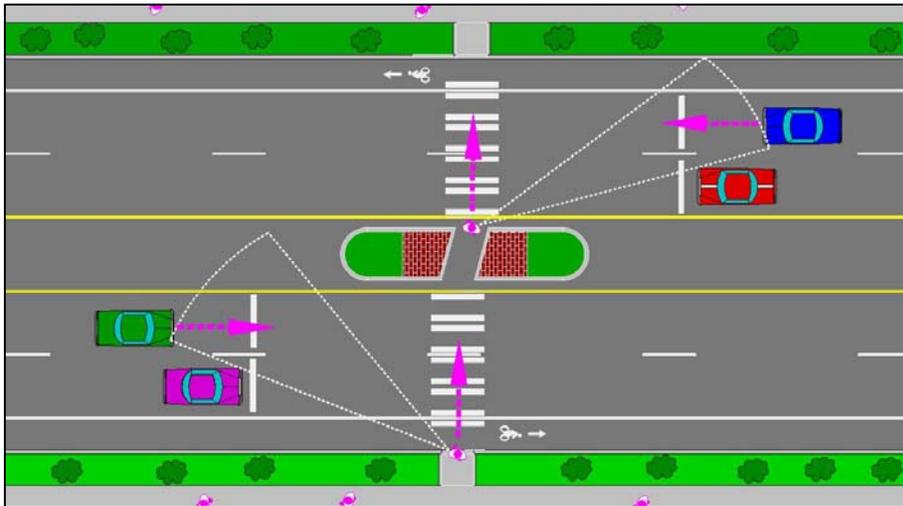
The SR 741 corridor should be transformed following the "complete street" concept – one that provides safety and service for pedestrian, bicycle and transit modes, as well as efficiently moving auto traffic. One of the key factors in not considering walking, bicycle use or transit use, is the lack of a safe and pleasing built environment for non-auto travel. Few people will walk or ride a bike if the environment includes unmarked crossings, mud puddles or a hard surface not separated from auto traffic. With a safe variety of modes available for travel and a more pleasing environment introduced, land uses depending upon the corridor will be competitive with newer developments in other areas now being targeted by shoppers, workers and travelers.

- Defined vehicular travel lane widths**
- Pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, crosswalks, pathways, etc.)**
- Bicycle facilities (bicycle lanes, shoulders, etc.)**
- Ample lighting**
- Buffer space**
- Contextual landscaping and other treatments**



Pedestrian / Bicycle Facilities

Need: A series of safe crossings coordinated with transit stops and designed with pedestrian and bicycle safety in mind.



One of the most frequently mentioned needs during this assessment was the necessity of providing a coordinated series of safe crossings along the corridor for pedestrian and bike traffic. Good pedestrian and bike crossings promote better linkage between land uses,

while also increasing safety and convenience for transit riders. Safe crossings on an arterial such as SR 741 need to provide a refuge island in the center of the roadway. This places the pedestrian or bicyclist in a relatively safe position and allows him or her to concentrate on traffic from only one direction at a time. The placement of transit stops also needs to be coordinated with safe crossing locations.



Need: To encourage healthy living via walking and bicycle use with corridor enhancements.

Making SR 741 a more human-oriented experience will go a long way toward encouraging healthy-living activities by residents, workers, shoppers and visitors along the corridor. Information provided by the Center for Disease Control shows a rapid rise in the percentage of adults diagnosed as obese in the United States between 1985 and

2003, due in part to our built environment that discourages walking and biking. More and more people are recognizing the need to incorporate walking and bike riding into their routine activities for health benefits.

During the assessment meetings, it was mentioned a number of times that an interesting and safe environment is needed along the corridor, including places to stop and rest. More landscaping emphasis should be placed on the northern half of the corridor to complement the recreational and residential uses. Speed limits along various parts of the corridor should be investigated to see if they are commensurate with desired pedestrian and bicycle use. In areas where a lower speed limit is desired, the appropriate studies and procedures as outlined under the Ohio Revised Code should be pursued to reduce the speed limit.

Many of the uses along the corridor are adjacent to each other, but walking or bicycle use is not convenient or safe. A lack of off-arterial connections between land uses is also common, forcing patrons to use the main roadway instead of other connections between properties.

STATE ROUTE 48



The Need for Identity

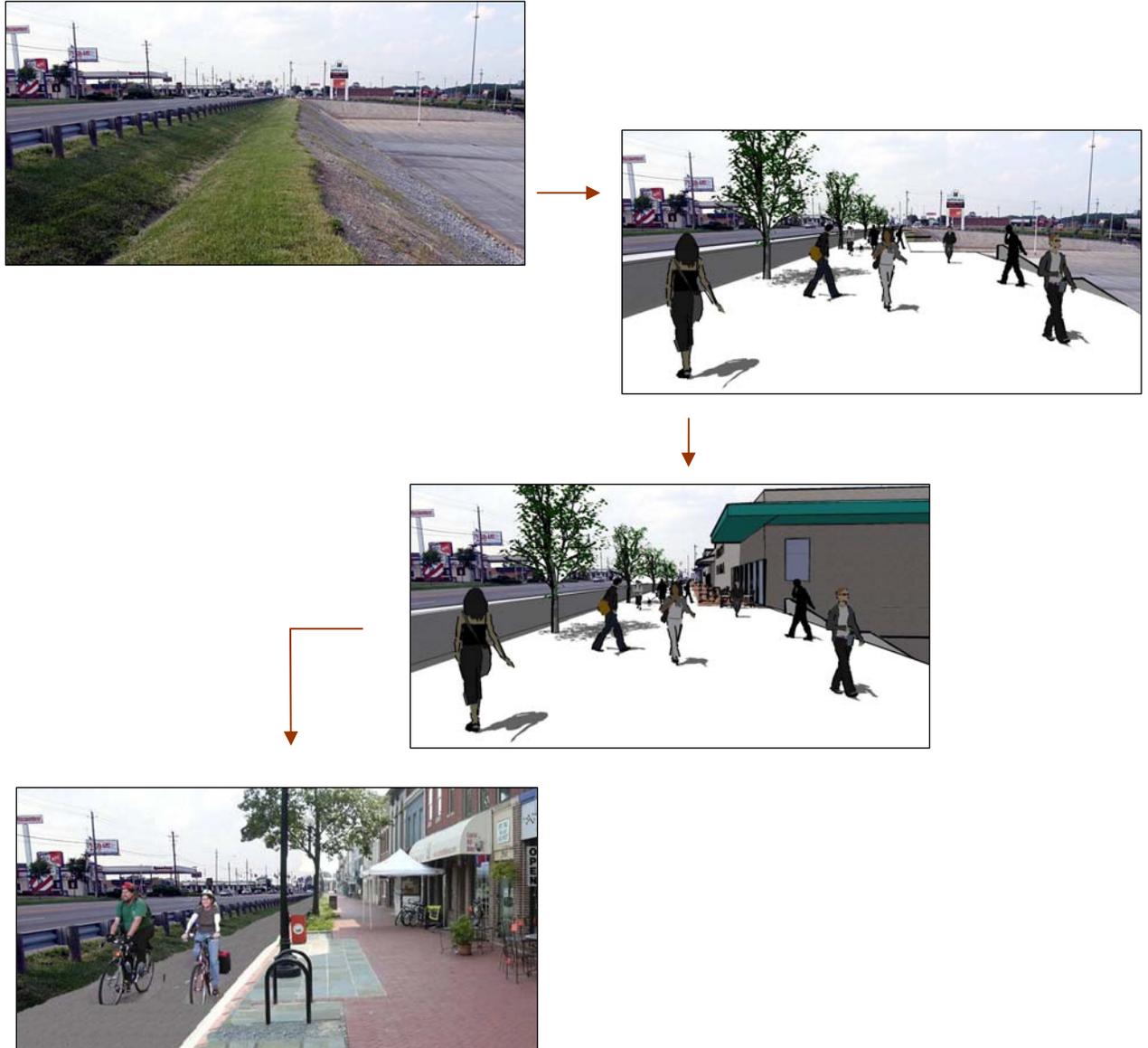
Need: Identity and branding of the overall activity center and its two primary components, the SR 741 and SR 725 corridors.

The southern Montgomery County activity center lacks an overall identity to help it compete. It's just known as "the Dayton Mall area" now, and no one knows what parts are in Miami Township, Miamisburg, West Carrollton or Washington Township as they drive down its two primary roads. An urban design theme for the area, coordinated roadway streetscape/landscaping along the corridor and a name brand with the SR 741 and SR 725 intersection as a focal point would go a long way in resolving this situation. The vision plan should include the basics for an overall road frontage concept involving access, buildings and landscaping along the corridor. Utility companies should be included in the planning process, as their lines and poles play an important part.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Next Steps

Recommendation: Break corridor improvements into manageable phases.



Improvement of the SR 741 corridor will be a long-term endeavor over the next 10-20 years. Not all improvements will be easy to finance or be accomplished within a short time period. Financing packages and phasing will need to be assembled for the more expensive undertakings. Some improvements will be dependent upon private redevelopment efforts similar to the ones the Dayton Mall is currently undertaking. On

the other hand, some improvements, such as safe crossings, could be accomplished relatively easy with the help of private developers. Miami Township is currently working with developers in the southern part of the corridor on safer crossings. The vision plan recommendations should include the cost and recommended phasing of various projects to improve the corridor. A three-tier system (Short Term – Low Cost, Medium Term – Medium Cost, Long Term – High Cost) should suffice.

Recommendation: Utilize existing relationship with and capabilities of ODOT and MVRPC.

ODOT has electronic roadway plans to use for design study along the corridor. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has a context-sensitive solutions web site (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/csd/index.cfm>) that can be used to guide a vision plan. In addition ODOT District 7 and MVRPC have planning staff and assistance capability for both safety and pedestrian/bike issues.

Improvement of SR 7 south of Tacoma, Washington Washington DOT Project



Recommendation: Coordinate local services and plans.

Coordination between township, city and county services along the corridor might lead to savings that could be channeled into corridor improvements recommended in the vision plan. Coordination of the vision plan with the Austin Pike Interchange Area Plan, the Cox Arboretum Master Plan and the Dayton Mall Walkable Community Study is vital. MVRPC is also undertaking a regional land use planning initiative that should be monitored for ways to integrate the corridor plan into larger regional efforts. Five Rivers MetroParks, Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, Miami Conservancy

District and the Miami County Park District are undertaking the development of a regional bikeway plan, including identification of feeder routes into the regional system.

DESIGN CONCEPTS FROM AUSTIN PIKE INTERCHANGE AREA PLAN



What's Next?

Recommendation: Continue oversight committee.

The oversight committee formed to supervise this assessment of the corridor should be continued. It is a vital information-sharing tool among the communities and incorporates the major stakeholders along the corridor. The next step should be to have the committee identify what needs to be targeted for more in-depth attention in Phase II. Ideas brought forward have been developing a book of standards that can be incorporated into future development as well as redevelopment projects. A common land use plan for the corridor was also mentioned.

To accomplish this next step, it is recommended the local governments, major institutional stakeholders and the business communities cooperate to fund a consultant to complete the vision plan. Once the vision plan is adopted, the communities and other parties involved with building and maintaining the physical environment will have a blueprint to follow for the transformation of the corridor.

Potential Funding Sources

Recommendation: Craft a funding strategy.

Local officials should work with Montgomery County, ODOT, MVRPC and school districts to craft funding strategies for improvements along the corridor. ODOT has a Safety Program and a Safe Routes to School Program. MVRPC oversees regionally-oriented roadway and enhancement funds. Montgomery County is involved with many economic development activities that should be investigated for use in the study area. An economic development tool such as tax increment financing might be useful to fund corridor improvements that spur or complement new development such as the Dayton

Mall's lifestyle center. Other tools such as joint economic development districts or cooperative economic development agreements should also be investigated. The Montgomery County Transportation Improvement District arrangement could be used to fund higher cost, long-term improvements similar to what was done with the Austin Interchange project. In addition, using part of the hotel/motel tax should be considered for improvements related to hospitality services and guests staying in the area. Several specific programs that should be further explored are detailed below:

- Development of a maintenance district along the corridor could enhance the ability to fund and maintain additional improvements.
- Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (TSCP) can provide up to 80% funding for eligible projects. Projects must either be designated by Congress or submitted by the Ohio Department of Transportation
- The Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) program provides limited funds to develop safe routes for primary and middle school students to bike and walk to school. A comprehensive SRTS plan must be prepared prior to applying for funds under the program.
- The State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) is a revolving loan program that could be utilized.
- Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) funding may be available if the project will cost more than \$5 million and accomplish one or more of the following: increase mobility, provide connectivity, increase the accessibility of a region for economic development, increase the capacity of a transportation facility, or reduce congestion. The project would have to qualify as a Tier 1 project in order to receive funding.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

List of Documents

Listed below are a number of reference documents that will assist in the development of this corridor vision:

- Access Management Plan for Miamisburg, Ohio. Miamisburg City Council. Ordinance 3559, adopted on September 4, 1984.
- Dayton Mall Evaluation of Potential S.R. 741 Intersection Modifications. Trans Associates Engineering Consultants, Inc. March 28, 2007.
- Location and Design Manuals for Roadway and Drainage. Ohio Department of Transportation. Latest Revision on January 19, 2007.
- 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan. Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission. May 2004 (With Amendments in January, 2005 and May, 2007).
- Official Thoroughfare Plan for Montgomery County, Ohio. Montgomery County Planning Commission. Latest Revision on January 8, 2004.
- State Highway Access Management Manual. Ohio Department of Transportation. Issued December 2001.
- Walkable Community Workshop Plan for Dayton Mall. Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission. June 2005.