



APWA MINNESOTA CHAPTER PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT OF THE YEAR NOMINATION FORM

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Submission Deadline: October 1, 2022

All nomination and supporting data are to be submitted as a PDF to Sarah at sarah.lloyd@bolton-menk.com with a maximum page size of 5 pages, including photos.

Project Nominated: Morningside Avenue/CSAH 15

Managing Agency: McLeod County
Contact Person: John Brunkhorst, PE
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Project Design Firm: Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. (SEH®)
Project Construction Administration Firm: Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. (SEH®)
Project General Contractor: Duininck Inc.

Name of Person Making Nomination: Justin Black
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Criteria for Nomination

- Project must be substantially completed by October 31, 2021 or October 31, 2022.
- Includes use of innovative construction management techniques and completion of the project on schedule.
- Maintained excellent safety performance and safety program throughout construction.
- Evidence of strong community relations during all project phases.
- Consideration given to the environment. Sustainable design techniques involved.
- Unusual accomplishments given adverse conditions.
- Provides future value to the public works profession and perception by the public.
- Additional considerations such as value engineering, innovative project financing, multi-agency coordination and participation.

Reasons for Nomination: Describe the project with the aspects and features of the project that fulfilled any of the applicable criteria listed. (Include description on a separate page.)

Morningside Avenue/CSAH 15 Reconstruction

CITY OF GLENCOE, MINNESOTA

Project Overview

The Morningside Avenue/CSAH 15 project in Glencoe was a crucial project when it comes to improving connectivity and safety in McLeod County. It involved both reconstruction of existing roadway and the addition of a new roadway, and was only made possible through extensive agency coordination and a cooperative agreement between the City and County.

This connection has been planned for decades,

being identified in various comprehensive

planning document and transportations studies.

This is the last phase of a series of three projects that began in 2005 to provide the City of Glencoe with an important second river crossing. The completed project provides a vital local and regional connection for McLeod County through the community of Glencoe between US 212 and TH 7.

The corridor was originally established in the 1960's. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) tried to build this corridor as a Trunk Highway 22 replacement in the late 90's, but these efforts were ultimately put on hold because of public outcry. This history made effective community relations another key component of successfully delivering the project.

NOW COMPLETED, THIS MORNINGSIDE AVENUE/CSAH 15 PROJECT INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING FEATURES AND IMPROVEMENTS:

- Construction of 0.5 miles of new urban roadway
- 700 ft. of reconstructed roadway
- Addition of a roundabout to minimize footprint and improve safety
- New regional highway corridor connection
- Improved drainage and stormwater ponding for local flood mitigation
- Trail connection to public school campus and regional trail system
- Purchase and removal of 2 homes near the rail crossing
- New railroad crossing with gates and signals for both pedestrians and vehicles
- Coordination and funding for closure of two other rail crossings and extensive sidetrack construction to reduce roadway conflicts
- Innovative funding

Innovative Construction Management

The project was constructed over the course of two years. The first year of construction included storm sewer, grading and base work. The second year included curb and gutter work along with paving. Importantly, this approach to construction allowed for the fill sections in the new roadway to have time to settle and go through a freeze thaw cycle.

Innovative construction management was especially important to account for the needs of businesses in the area, as well as the traffic that moves through the area each day. The team needed to communicate with stakeholders and provide a thoughtful phasing plan to maintain public support and keep businesses open and traffic moving throughout construction.

Construction was phased to allow for the existing County Road alignment to remain open until the final year of construction. The intersections at both 11th Street and 14th

Street were constructed in phases to allow traffic to move through the intersection during construction. A temporary roadway was constructed to accommodate the adjacent grocery store pharmacy and coffee shop. Temporary access for homes was also restored after grading and base work.





Safety Performance and Safety Program

The location for this added connection presented a number of potential safety challenges during construction. For example, it involved the implementation of a wetland crossing as well as construction near active railroad tracks. SEH, the County, the City and the contractor worked together to develop and follow a safety program to address these issues and maintain overall safety.

Coordination with the railroad and the City was especially important for a safe work site.

Construction progress meetings with all stakeholders outlined work timelines adjacent to the railroad tracks and at the City street intersections.



Construction near the railroad required detailed schedule coordination.

Coordination with the utility company to de-energize the electrical transmission line during installation of the large diameter storm sewer was also key to a safe work site. Regular emailed project updates to the local emergency services kept them aware of project status and access closures. By bringing these components together, the team maintained a safe work site throughout construction.



Community Relations

Given the history with this site and the importance of earning and maintaining public support, the team used a range of techniques and outlets for community relations. These included the following:

- Open house events during preliminary and final design
- Onsite meetings with adjacent property owners both prior to and during construction
- Regular project update newsletters via mail and email
- Social media for project status updates during construction

It was key to listen and acknowledge the concerns that people had about the project, especially given its long history.

In response, SEH worked with the City and County to build a public outreach plan around frequent updates and offering a number of different options for community feedback. This also allowed the team to consistently make the case for the positive outcomes that would result from the completed project.



The team maintained strong community relations for a project that many people had previously objected to.



Environmental Considerations and Sustainable Design Techniques

This project's solutions with a focus on protecting the environment and minimizing impacts are outlined below.

KEY DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS

The City of Glencoe and the Buffalo Creek Watershed District had completed several studies to construct a trunk storm sewer system to address flooding in the area. The project design included coordination between the City, Watershed District and County to incorporate this trunk storm sewer system into the project, saving several hundred thousand dollars from what would have been a standalone project.

The project also included construction of a new stormwater pond as well as securing easements for the expansion of an existing pond on private property. The storm sewer system utilized the existing outfall to reduce concerns about negative effects to the downstream private ditch serving as the outlet for the project. The drainage work also mitigated localized flooding concerns that were previously experienced by HRA homes adjacent to the project.

PROTECTING WETLANDS

The implementation of a roundabout addresses the traffic needs for the roadway while minimizing the project's environmental footprint. Additionally, the solution to construct the stormwater pond in the old highway alignment instead of the wetland area further reduced the environmental impact of the project.

PROTECTING AND CREATING GREEN SPACE

Two existing homes had to be removed that were adjacent to the area because of project impacts and the change in rail traffic. This area was developed into a green space that will enhance drainage and provide open space, with the added benefit of improved sightlines for safety. The project limits were also managed to avoid negative effects to an adjacent City park, including eliminating the need to remove trees.



TRAIL CONNECTIONS

The project provided the final connecting segment between two existing trail systems, which connects two of the largest parks in the City and also extends outside of the City to a County park and an area school campus. The completed project also created the only signalized pedestrian rail crossing with crossing arms in the City.

Unusual Accomplishments Given Adverse Conditions

This project's unusual accomplishments and responses to challenging conditions are outlined below.

AGENCY COORDINATION

The Morningside Avenue/CSAH 15 project involved extensive agency coordination between several governmental and non-governmental agencies, including some with potential competing interests. This included:

- McLeod County
- City of Glencoe
- Glencoe Light & Power
- Buffalo Creek Watershed District
- MnDOT Rail Office
- MnDOT State Aid
- Twin Cities and Western Railroad
- Great River Energy

With this background, it was a significant accomplishment for SEH, the County, the City and the rest of the team to reach key agreements on this cooperative project. By finding agreement on issues that include, but are not limited to, cost sharing, permitting, design and other factors, the overall team provided a path forward to construct this project.

RAILROAD COORDINATION

Of particular note is the complexity of the railroad coordination and agreements that were required. This included the following issues:

- The need for a roadway crossing and a designated trail crossing at this location
- The rebuilding and extension of a track siding to reduce rail and traffic conflicts
- The closure of two other railroad crossings

It was crucial for SEH and the County to be proactive with these parts of the design and the required railroad agreements. By maintaining strong communication with the railroad and securing the required approvals, the team was able to implement rail crossings that improve overall operations while avoiding potential hindrances to the project schedule.

The previous Twin Cities and Western Rail (TCW) crossing location had both a mainline track and track siding whose operations frequently blocked the steep, deficient truck route. Close coordination and agreements with TCW focused on developing a plan for the new crossing that reduced blockages through the construction of a new, extended and relocated track siding. This work included the closure of an adjacent City street crossing as well as the closing of a nearby County Road crossing.

WATERSHED DISTRICT COORDINATION

Among the agencies listed, the coordination with the Buffalo Creek Watershed District was noteworthy to address a technical challenge to incorporate the aforementioned trunk sewer system as well as the new stormwater pond and expansion of an existing pond. SEH, the County and the City worked with the Watershed District to identify and implement a solution to address this drainage as part of the design.

UTILITY COORDINATION

Coordination early in the project with Great River Energy and McLeod Cooperative power was key in relocating several transmission line poles prior to the start of construction. Utility coordination was also important for de-energizing the line to provide a safe work site during construction of the trunk storm sewer.

PUBLIC CONCERN

As noted, an extensive public relations process was required to keep this project moving toward final construction. In addition to a vocal group of people fighting the need for this important project, there were concerns raised that caused a potential schedule challenge. As the project was nearing completion, the agricultural industry raised concerns about accessibility for larger equipment, leading to last minute changes to the project design.

The ability to work through these difficult and controversial issues and reach a compromise was a major focus of this project. SEH, the County and the City were proactive with outreach and understood the need to maintain that communication through all phases of design and construction.



The new roundabout met the area's traffic needs and minimized the environmental impact.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

With this roadway serving residences, businesses, agricultural industry and a public school campus, the team needed to implement solutions to meet traffic needs in the area. Design of a roundabout at the north end of the project provides traffic calming as high speed vehicles enter the City from the north, and it also accommodates a large volume of turning movements from the school campus located just west of the intersection.



Future Value to Public Works Profession and Perception by the Public

As previously noted, this project was the last phase of a project initiated in the 1960's with the preservation of the roadway corridor, followed by the bridge and two roadway projects in the mid-2000's. With a project this long in the making that had previously received negative attention, the eventual agreements between stakeholders provides value in terms of how to get cooperative projects moving forward.

The final product is the only roadway in the community that provides access across Buffalo Creek to US Highway 212 while also providing direct access to the community and other regional transportation corridors. These are examples of improvements that support a positive perception of engineering because they provide tangible benefits for the people using these facilities each day.

This project provides future value to the engineering profession and perception by the public because the team addressed these technical challenges and implemented long-needed improvements that benefit the community, county and region. A summary of key components of the project includes the following:

- Design of a roundabout at the north end of the project provides traffic calming and minimizes wetland impacts
- Provides connections to existing trail systems in the City connecting parks and schools
- Addresses drainage and flooding issues, saving significant costs in the process
- Adds new rail crossings and improves rail operations
- Meets the needs of both the City and County



Additional Considerations

Funding for the project came from multiple sources. These included the following:

- MnDOT Rail Safety Funding
- TCW Railroad
- LRIP earmarks (two separate bonding years)
- County State Aid
- Municipal State Aid
- Local City/County funds

A key accomplishment is the cooperative agreement and the subsequent coordination to make this project a reality. This included tracking and complying with the requirements for various funding sources, as well as coming to an agreement on cost sharing. The result is a project that fulfills priorities and initiatives for the County and the City, as well as other project stakeholders.